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Pamela's Prodigy  
By  
Glyde Fitch

AL 1555.5.34

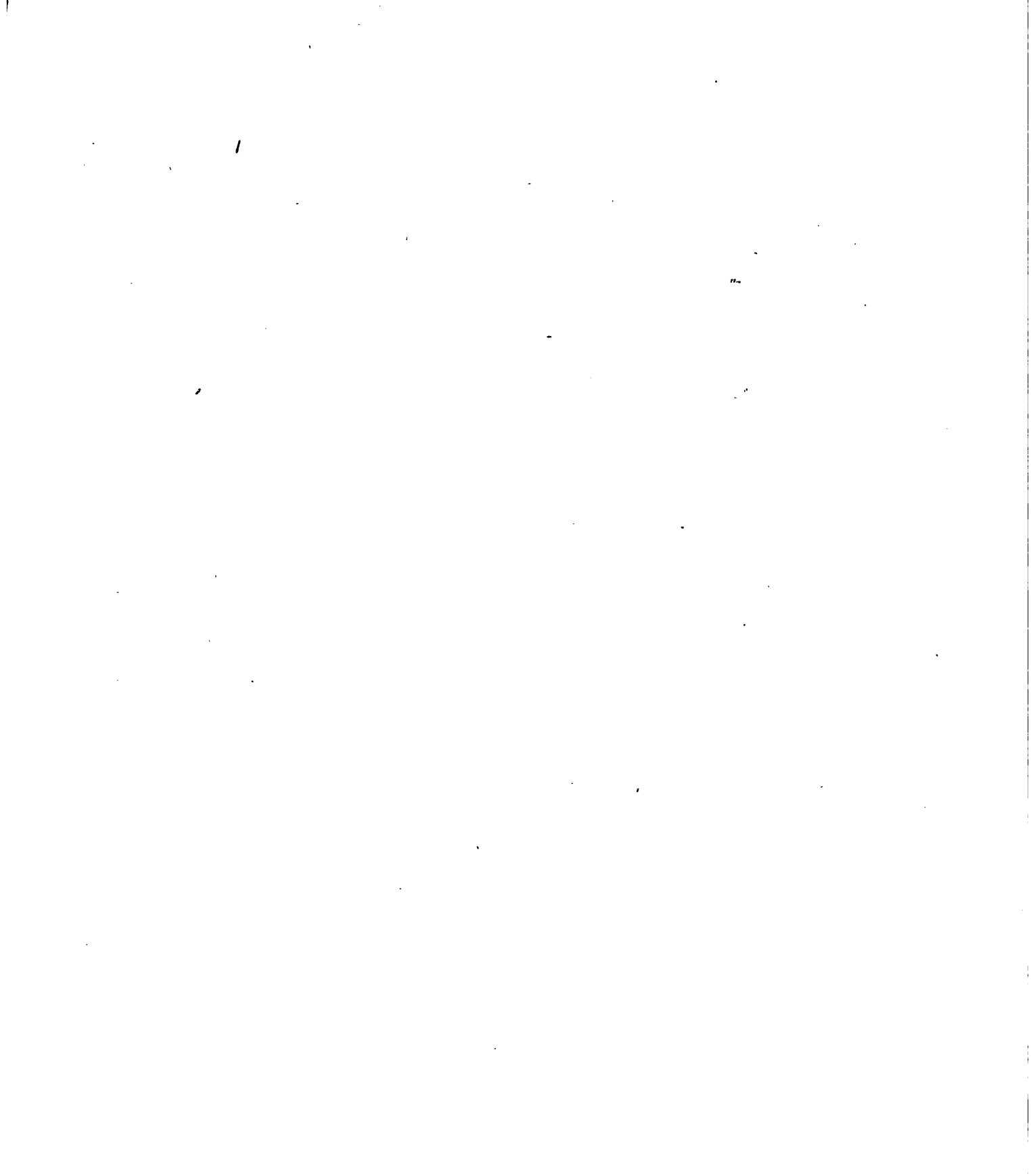
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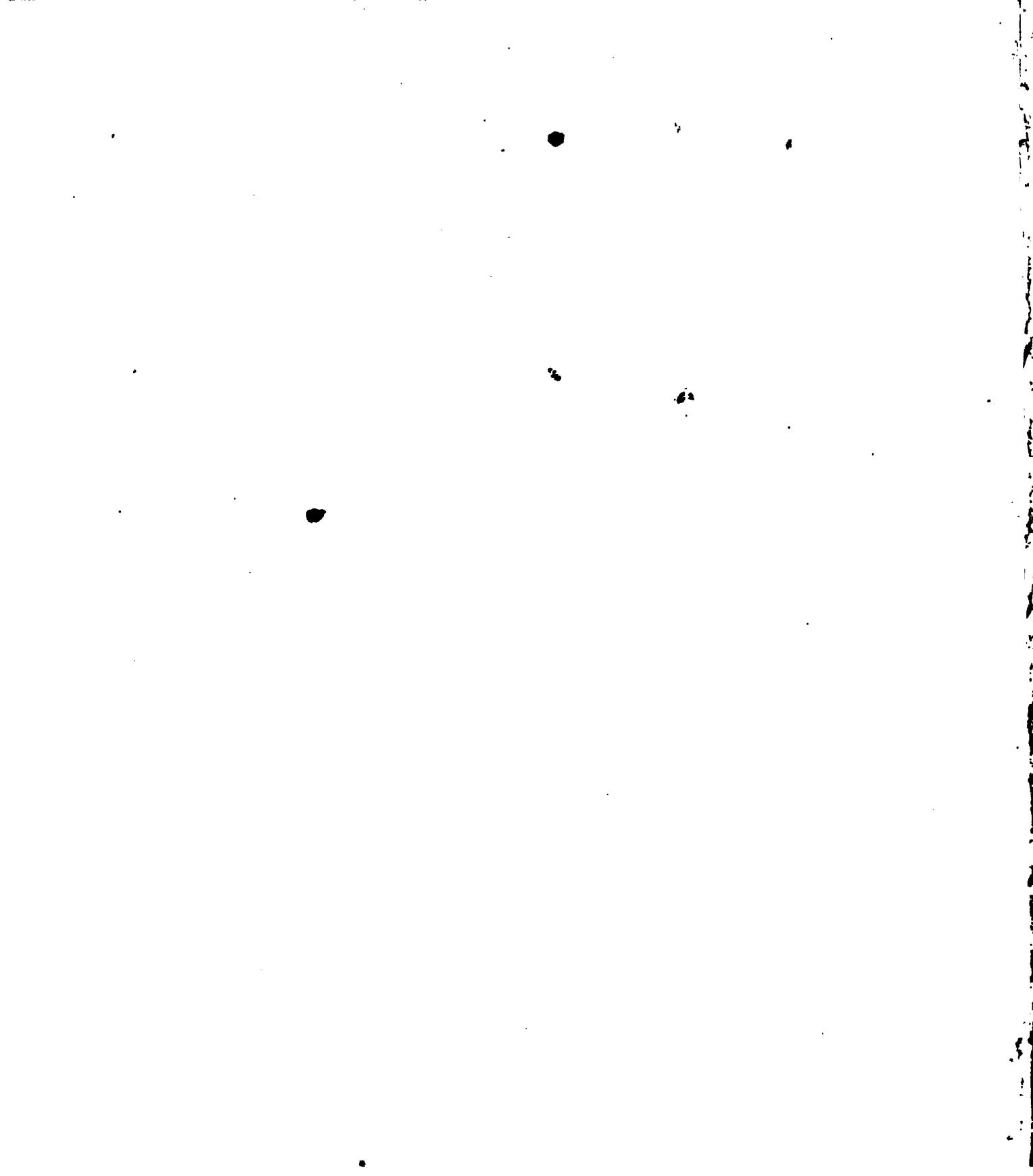
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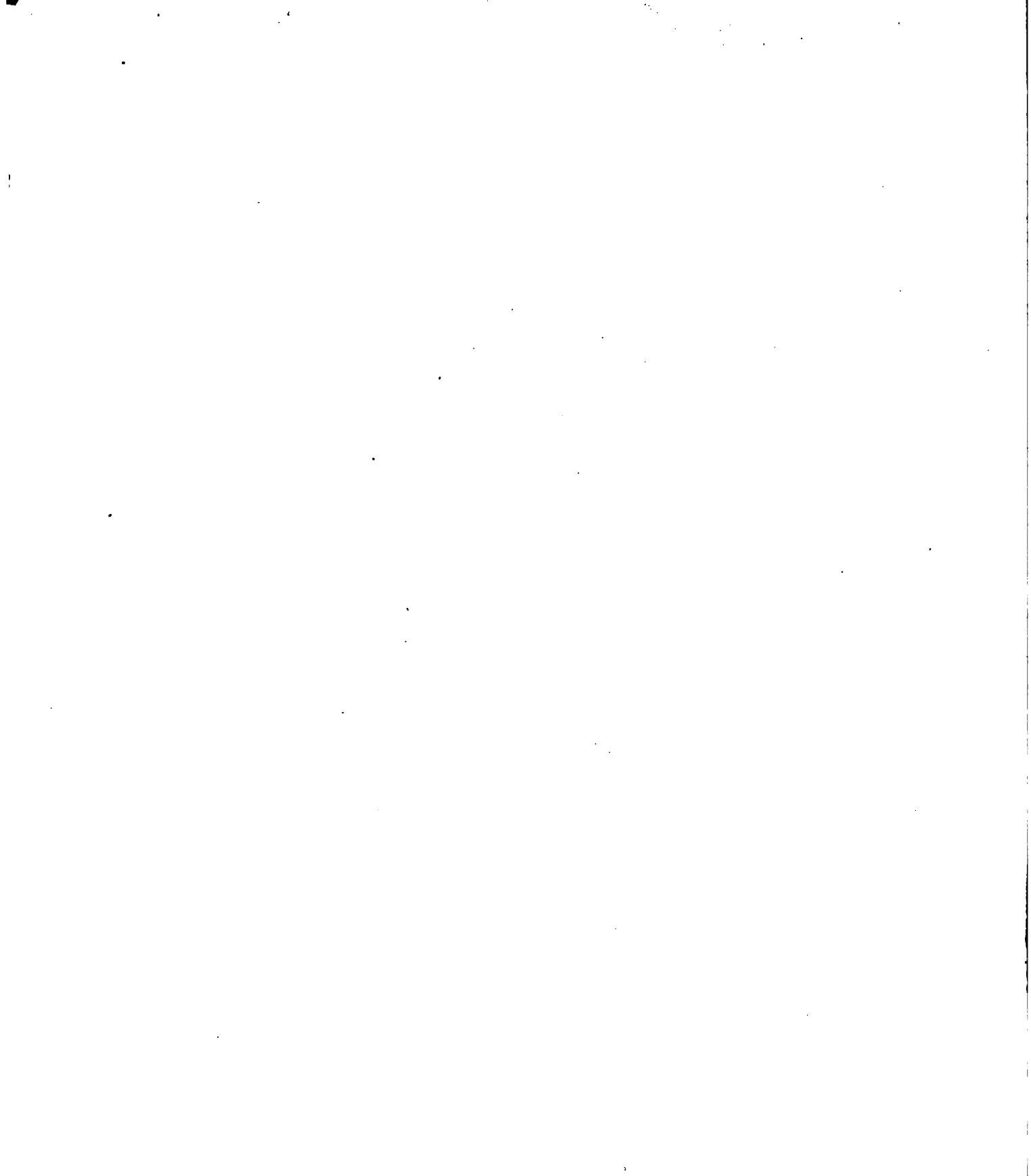
Nov. 1853.

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# Pamela's Prodigy





The drawings have been made  
by Virginia Gerson





# Pamela's Prodigy

A Lively Comedy

By Clyde Fitch . . .



Geo. M. Allen Company

New York . . . . MDCCCXCIII

AL 1555.5.34

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Author of

BEAU BRUMMELL  
FRÉDÉRIC LEMAITRE  
A MODERN MATCH  
A WAVE OF LIFE  
THE KNIGHTING OF THE TWINS  
Etc.



To Elisabeth Marbury  
In Loyal Friendship







## Note

### THE MOST CONSPICUOUS MANNERISMS OF THIS ARTIFICIAL PERIOD WERE AS FOLLOWS

*The women walked with a gliding, "scooping" motion, which was sometimes called "the fashionable dip."*

*Their curtsy was a "bob," i. e., rather quick, and made principally with the knees, the neck and waist being held stiff and straight.*

*The men affected what has since been nicknamed the "teapot" styl.*

*Their arms never hung loosely at their sides.*

*One was generally crooked, while the other was placed akimbo, with the hand resting on the corseted waist*

*Their bow was very low, and was made by moving the body from the waist up.*



## The People in the Play.

MRS. PAMELA PODKINS, *a widow with a large fortune and a daughter.*

CLARISSA PODKINS, *the daughter*

MISS LUCINDA MITTS, *a spinster, and the preceptress of an orphan asylum.*

LADY IGGINS, *a guest.*

A LADY OF TITLE, *ditto.*

MAID *to Mrs. Podkins.*

SERAPHINA, *the Prodigy.*



MR. ALGERNON SERIOUS, *a musician.*

MR. SAMUEL BOGLE, *brother to Mrs. Podkins.*

MR. ADOLPHUS TODD, *a dancing master.*

W. JENNINGS, *the manager of the Prodigy.*

MR. EDWARD HAMILTON, *a "young Buck."*

SIR TIMOTHY IGGINS, *a guest.*

A BARONET.

GENTLEMEN. LADIES. GUESTS.

NINE ORPHANS.

SERVANT *to Mrs. Podkins.*



PRODUCED AT THE ROYAL  
COURT THEATRE, LONDON, OCTOBER 21, 1891,  
WITH THE FOLLOWING CAST



Mr. Algernon Serious . . . . .	MR. GEORGE GIDDENS
Mr. Adolphus Todd . . . . .	MR. EDWARD RIGHTON
Mr. Samuel Bogle . . . . .	MR. DONALD ROBERTSON
Mr. Jennings . . . . .	MR. SEYMOUR HICKS
Mr. Edward Hamilton . . . . .	MR. PERCY BROUGH
Sir Timothy Iggins . . . . .	MR. CHARLES ROCK
James . . . . .	MR. JOHN CLULOW
Mrs. Pamela Podkins . . . . .	MRS. JOHN WOOD
Clarissa Podkins . . . . .	MISS MARY JOCELYN
Miss Lucinda Mitts . . . . .	MISS EMILY MILLER
Lady Iggins . . . . .	MRS. EDMUND PHELPS
A Lady of Title . . . . .	MISS JESSIE LEE
Marie . . . . .	MISS MARIANNE CALDWELL
Seraphina . . . . .	MISS DAISY STRATTON



ACT I.

The Morning Party

Mrs. Podkins

At home

*The infant phenomenon  
will play at 2 o'clock*



ACT II.

The day after at Mrs. Podkins'

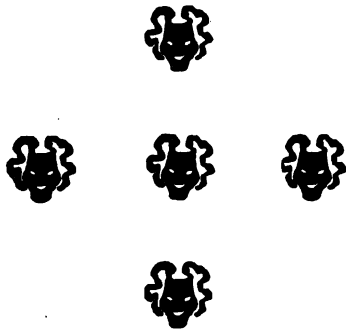


ACT III.

The Sands at Margate the following noon



THE PERIOD OF THE PLAY IS 1830



# PAMELA'S PRODIGY.



## THE FIRST ACT.



*The drawing room at Mrs. Podkins'.*

*The walls are hung in cherry brocade, the same material covering the chairs and hanging by the windows. The wood work and furniture are gilt. On the right is a piano—the shape that followed the spinnett—and above it on the wall hangs a large family portrait (Mrs. Podkins' mother at the age of 59,—painted as a shepherdess with a lamb, and a wreath of roses). A harp stands beside the piano.*

*Guests are seated in a semi-circle at the back, and are talking volubly.*

*Mr. Bogle, a portly, good-natured gentleman, stands by the door to greet those just arriving.*

---

BARONET (*his voice rising above the others.*) What has become of Mrs. Podkins?

(*Enter Miss Mitts, from a side door. She is an elderly female, somewhat acidulated, and with scunter and shorter skirts than the other ladies present.*)

MISS MITTS. Well, Mrs. Podkins was here, but she seems to be invisible at the present moment.

(*All talk very loud.*)



SERVANT (*announces.*) Sir Timothy Higgins, Lady Higgins.  
(*Mr. Bogle receives Sir Timothy and Lady Iggins, a large, happy couple, in the prime of life.*)

LADY IGGINS (*to Mr. Bogle.*) I hope the Phenomenon hasn't played yet?

(*Miss Mitts speaks to the Lady of Title, who sits next her, and regretfully watches Mr. Bogle leave her to welcome Lady Iggins.*)

MISS MITTS. My dear, they always come late. She imagines people will think they have been to several other houses first.

LADY OF TITLE. Perhaps, now they have, Miss Mitts.

MISS MITTS. Don't be a goose, my dear! Three-quarters of an hour ago they walked from their own door here, with her dress rolled up under her mantilla, and her ankles exposed to the sun, and the watchman.

LADY OF TITLE. Ah, my love, you know everyone is not made of money like Mrs. Podkins; the Iggins' are in reduced circumstances.

MISS MITTS. 'Tis their own fault—who wouldn't be with eleven children! They lived very comfortably till they began to have twins. She's entirely too attentive to Mr. Bogle; a woman as much married as she is has no right to flirt with a bachelor. (*They continue conversing in pantomime.*)

LADY IGGINS (*to Mr. Bogle.*) I had to put the children to bed myself; my nursery maid has gone,—the way of the world.

BOGLE. Dear me, astray?

LADY IGGINS. Mercy! no, I hope not; I suppose there was a certificate. (*Joins the semicircle of ladies. Miss Mitts and the Lady rise to give Lady Iggins their seat, but she refuses and stands.*)

BOGLE (*to Sir Timothy.*) And how are your affairs getting on, Sir Timothy?



SIR TIMOTHY. Middlin'. Little Emeline is down with the croup, but is expected to live.

BOGLE. O, I mean down in the county ; how's your party pulling ?

SIR TIMOTHY. Middlin', but to tell you the truth, lately an increase in the population has obliged me to pay more attention to *Home* than the *State*. (*They talk together.*)

MISS MITTS (*to Lady Iggins.*) You're never too late for refreshments, Lady Iggins ?

LADY IGGINS. You ought to know, Miss Mitts, you are always there to see.

MISS MITTS. Your ladyship must acknowledge, however, that I never come just at the refreshment hour.

LADY IGGINS. Certainly not, my dear, we all know your motto: "First come, first served."

(*Clarissa runs in but stops short, surprised at seeing everybody. She is a very pretty young girl of sixteen.*)

CLARISSA. I wonder if Adolphus—O!—Everyone has gone to the dining-room but you people, and Ma's upstairs with the Prodigy.

(*Everyone exclaims, rising one after another, and during the following speeches all leave the room*)





LADY IGGINS. O, has it really come?

LADY OF TITLE. What's she like?

MISS MITTS (*doubtingly.*) Is she so young as they say?

CLARISSA. I don't know, I haven't seen her yet, but I heard Ma tell the footman to be careful and not step on it.

LADY OF TITLE. La! how amusing.

BOGLE (*to Lady Iggins, offering his arm.*) Lady Iggins, will you have an ice?

LADY IGGINS. I'll have two, Mr. Bogle, and some cakes in my pocket for the children. (*They follow the others out, Miss Mitts watching them as they go.*)

MISS MITTS. Titles take precedence over hearts. I have been waiting twelve years to have him take *me* down to supper.

SIR TIMOTHY (*approaching her.*) Miss Mitts—

MISS MITTS (*aside, after perceiving Sir Timothy.*) Another married man! I do not get an unmarried one to take me anywhere once out of seven times.—Thank you, Sir Timothy. (*They start to go out.*)

SIR TIMOTHY. And how are your charges, Miss Mitts? Do the little orphans prosper under your kind care?

MISS MITTS. Prosper! I assure you they increase and multiply till I'm half mad. (*Sir Timothy and Miss Mitts leave the room.*)

CLARISSA (*alone.*) Mr. Hamilton hasn't come. It proves his affections are not mine. I'd better pine for Adolphus than him if I can—but I can't. However, it will kill time to flirt with Adolphus. I may *elope* with Adolphus—(*going toward small door, turns and stands still*)—but I vow I'll not marry him! Never! Now I'll let him out. (*Calls.*) Come out, Adolphus.

(*Enter Todd, a mincing, affected little dancing master, cautiously.*)

TODD. Venus calls—Terpsichore obeys! (*Taking a pose.*)

CLARISSA. Sh! (*Looking around.*)

TODD (*suiting action to words.*) Gentleman advances to lady—lady gives left hand—gentleman puts arm around her waist. (*Here a second's pause, with a languishing look from Todd to Clarissa, and a delicate squeeze suggested. They now stand in the position for dancing.*) My Taglioni! (*He turns her, and says aside over her shoulder.*)

(*Aside.*) I wonder how much money her mother'll give her when she marries?

CLARISSA (*slyly.*) Do you really love me?

TODD. My poetry of Motion! Do I dance gracefully? (*He takes a few fancy steps.*)

CLARISSA. But would you die if I should change my mind and not have you?

TODD. I would, and I'd do it demned gracefully!

CLARISSA. Would you drown yourself?

TODD (*squirming.*) No—that's too wet.

CLARISSA. O!—you'd hang yourself?

TODD (*shuddering.*) No—that's too dry. No, my Catherine de Medici! I would put on poisoned slippers for the dance of death, and die as I have lived, dan—I mean loving you. (*He takes a pose. During his speech, Clarissa has gone to the door and is about to go out.*) Don't leave me, Clarissa! (*Clarissa passes out.*) How easy it is for her to leave me! I must hasten matters or she'll be leaving me for good. Demme! she may, so soon as her dowry is mine; and yet, I don't know—I think I should miss her!

(*Clarissa returns with plate of cakes and an ice.*)

CLARISSA. I thought you'd get hungry in that closet. (*Holding*



*out the plates to him. Todd takes a cake off the plate in each hand, and eats ravenously.)*

TODD. O, not at all! not at all! (*They sit facing each other with Clarissa's back to the audience.*)

CLARISSA. I was afraid of Ma's seeing you if you went to the dining-room, and she'd perceive at once you were no one she knew. Eat Dolph! eat! (*Feeding him some of the ice.*)

TODD (*eating.*) Not a bit more! If I were to see her, Clarissa, I doubt I could contain

myself. I would fall on my knees, so (*suiting the action to the words.*)

CLARISSA. Ma would probably box your ears.

TODD. And say: I love your daughter!

CLARISSA (*making him rise.*) Don't dare to. I'm afraid she'd say yes; it would be just like Ma; her heart rules her, and the only comfort in loving a dancing master is that you have to keep it secret.

TODD. Clarissa!

CLARISSA. Somebody's coming! It might be Ma! (*Takes him toward the closet.*)

TODD. If we're going to elope, why can't we do so instanter?

CLARISSA. For one thing there won't be a full moon for three weeks.

TODD. My sun, my moon, my milky way! what has the moon to do with it?

CLARISSA. In an elopement that is *en règle*, dear Adolphus, the moon is more important than the license.

TODD (*in the doorway of the closet.*) You'll let me out again as soon as you can, won't you?

(*Miss Mitts laughs off stage.*)

CLARISSA (*hurriedly.*) Yes, yes! (*Shutting door. She gets down on her knees, and finishes her speech in a half whisper through the key hole.*) Remember, I won't marry you at all if I can't do so clandestinely! (*She rises hastily as Mr. Bogle and Miss Mitts enter.*)

BOGLE. What's this! a secret tête-à-tête? I heard some one leave you Clarissa.

MISS MITTS. And 'twas a man's step. I know the sound of a man's step,—who's leaving you?

CLARISSA. Ah! Miss Mitts do you know how they sound coming back?

MISS MITTS. I hope to hear them some day.

CLARISSA. You will; they always come back.

MISS MITTS. Don't you believe it,



my dear! and take my advice, don't let 'em go. Don't you believe all this fiddle-faddle about there being plenty of fish in the sea! It's no such thing! The sea's getting emptied. There's a species of woman called "widow" now-a-days, who scoops 'em all in with nets. If you've got a nibble, my dear, hook him, hook him!

CLARISSA. Is this true, uncle Sammy?

MISS MITTS. O, Mr. Bogle's a naughty shark, who consumes us little minnows. *(She starts slightly as she notices the plate of ice and the cakes which Todd left.) (Half aside.)* Dear me, some one has left an ice; how wasteful! *(Looks around cautiously at Clarissa and Mr. Bogle, and sitting down in the chair next to the ice and cakes, she manages to slip the cakes into her pocket and takes up the ice.)*

BOGLE *(sitting down.)* The truth is, Clarissa, if you don't stop all this romancing, I'll tell your Ma.

*(Clarissa puts her arms around Bogle's neck, coaxingly.)*

CLARISSA. No, you won't, for you to expose me now after I've confided in you, would be betraying my trust.

MISS MITTS *(eating the ice.)* Dear me, I hope Mr. Bogle would never betray anybody.

BOGLE. This new fangled sentiment is turning the child's head.

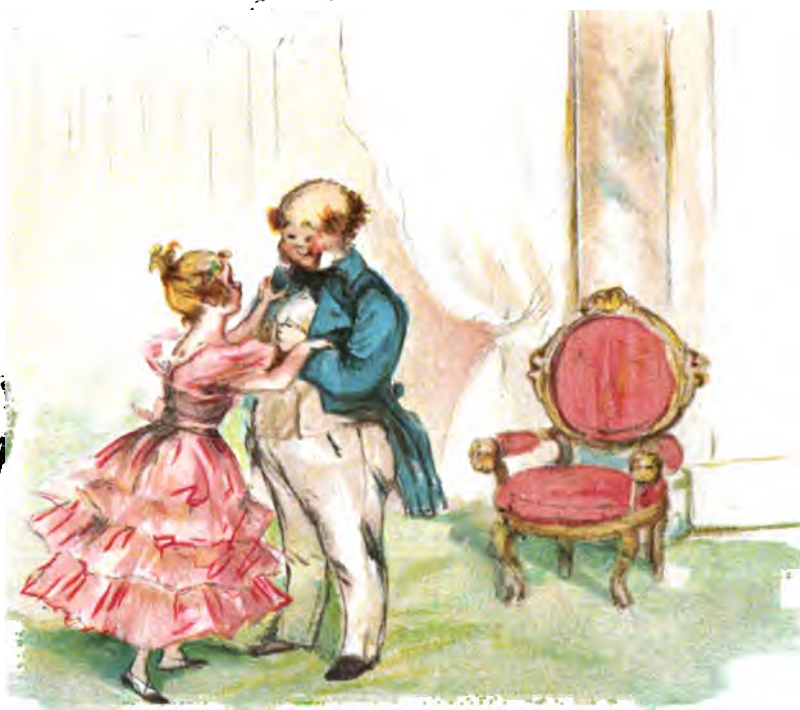
CLARISSA. Well, lack of it hasn't been able to turn your good heart, Nunkey.

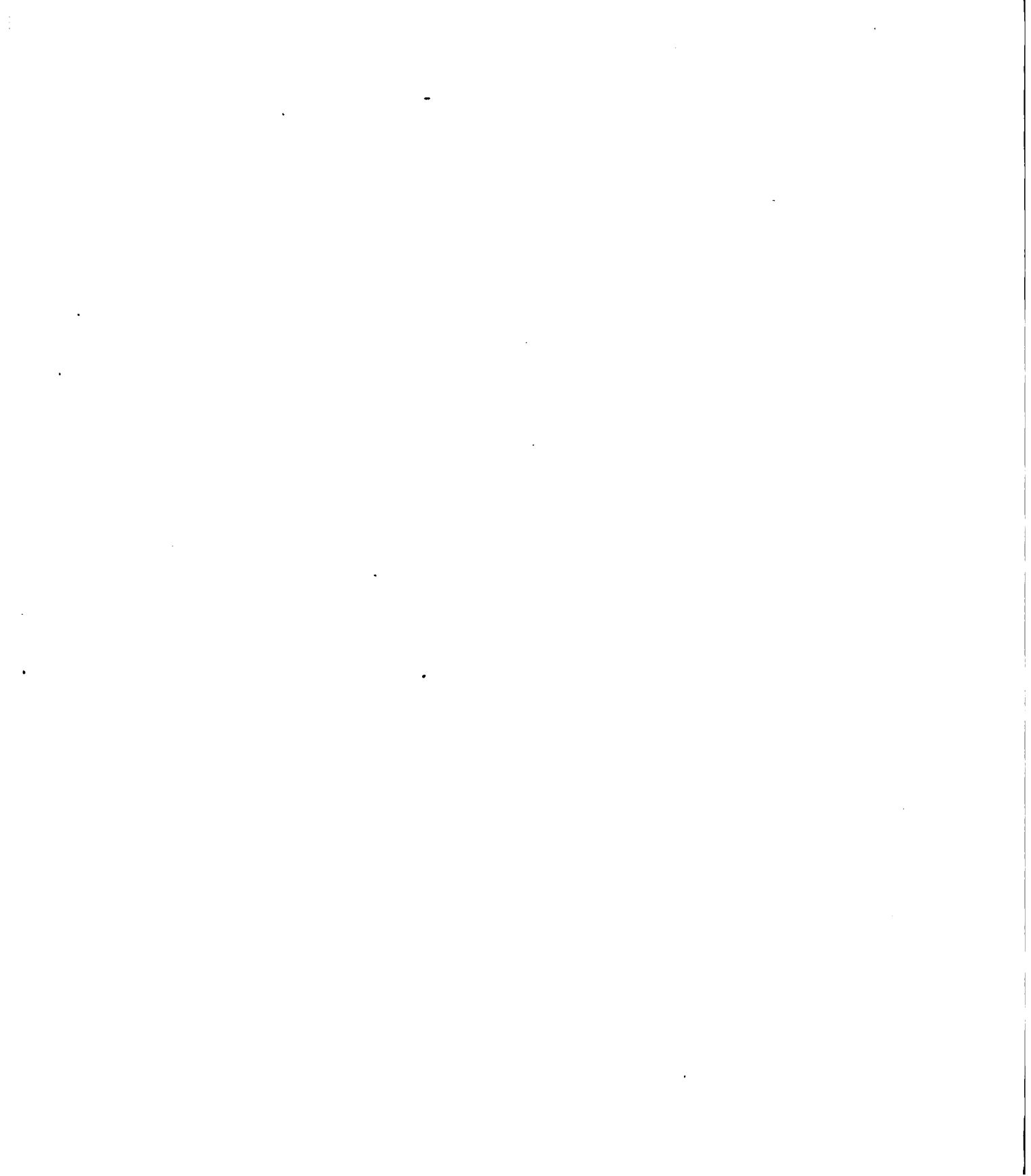
MISS MITTS *(aside, sentimentally.)* I wish it would,—turn it this way.

BOGLE. It's near time the Infant Phenomenon made her appearance, but I should think the poor child would be too tired to play so soon after her concert.

MISS MITTS. A child tired! never! they are born rested, and the faculty to tire comes in with their teens.

*(Sir Timothy and Lady Iggins re-enter.)*





LADY IGGINS. Mrs. Podkins is coming! The Prodigy's finishing its supper.

SIR TIMOTHY. I saw her feet as she went up the stairs. She reminded me of little Emeline.

*(The Lady of Title and the Baronet come in with more guests.)*

LADY OF TITLE. Here is Mrs. Podkins.

*(The guests all stand up by their seats.)*

PAMELA *(is heard speaking off the stage.)* La! Yes, let her eat all she can. You can't expect her to play on an empty stomach.

MISS MITTS. Dear Mrs. Podkins! she doesn't realize music comes from the head.

PAMELA *(still off the stage.)* Huh!—O, very well, I'll see to it myself. *(Her voice grows fainter with the last words. The guests all sit down with a murmur of disappointment.)*

BOGLE *(going to the door and calling.)* But, Pamela! you are forgetting your guests. We are all waiting to see you.

LADY IGGINS. Really, Mr. Bogle, so long as Mrs. Podkins stays with the child she'll never be ready to play.

BOGLE *(he goes out after her.)* I will bring Pamela here.

CLARISSA. La! Any one who tries to bring Ma anywhere before she's ready will have their hands full.

MISS MITTS. But when your Ma is ready, she's *ready!* When she was married to your Pa, she was ahead of time herself, and caught the mumps waiting in the porch for him.

PAMELA *(is heard again off the stage.)* Well, Sammy! The child looks half starved! She must play the food away through her finger ends.

LADY IGGINS. Mr. Bogle has brought her back.

*(All the guests rise excitedly with a pleased murmur and watch the door.)*



BOGLE (*speaks off the stage.*) But Pamela—

SERVANT (*speaking off the stage.*) She wants more, ma'am.

PAMELA (*speaks off the stage.*) Gracious! where does she put it all! Sammy, I'll join you in a jiffy. (*Her voice dies away again. Guests sit down with a disappointed murmur to each other as Bogle comes back.*)

BOGLE. It's no use; the man who tries to hurry, persuade, or lead a woman, is an idiot.

MISS MITTS. Ah! Mr. Bogle, we women are not all alike. I, for instance, am rather easily lead.

PAMELA (*speaks off the stage again.*) La! Bless the child's heart— (*Pamela enters, a handsome woman of about thirty, a somewhat loud, good-hearted creature, dressed in yellow with a wreath of roses in her hair.*)

(*Lady Iggins comes forward and curtsys, Pamela curtsys back and continues speaking.*)

What! Lady Iggins! Then you have come, but you ARE late. How's little Emeline, better? and the twins, well? and the baby? and the boys? and your oldest daughter? and the rest of the children?

LADY IGGINS. All well, I thank you.

PAMELA. I'm glad of that, for it does seem as if the more children one has the harder it is to lose one of them.

SIR TIMOTHY. How did she get here, Mrs. Podkins?

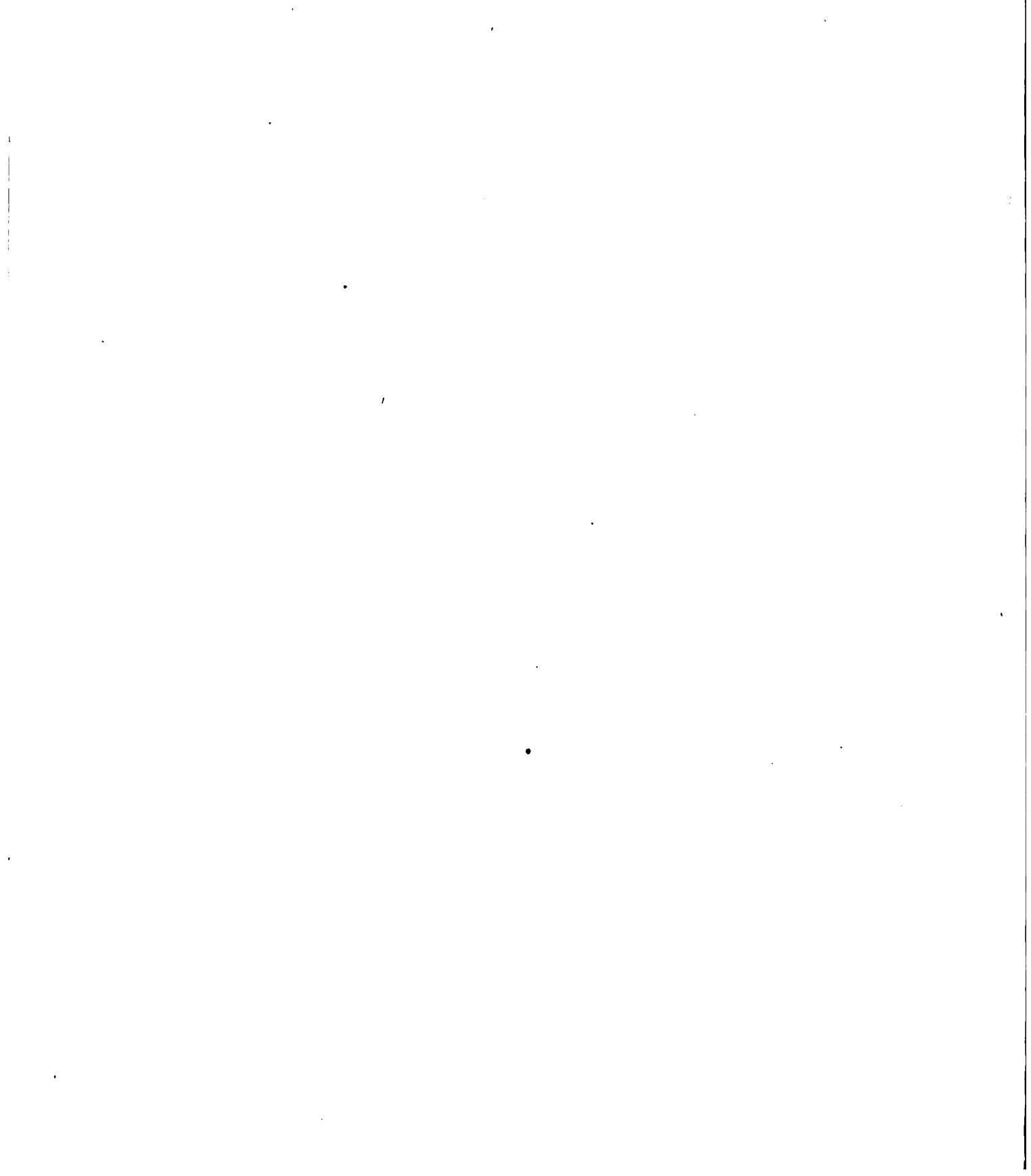
PAMELA. What she? O, the Infant Phenomenon. A man brought her. The—thing-em-bob,—er—you know, the man who winds her up—the manager.

LADY OF TITLE. La! Isn't she alive then?

(*A servant enters and speaks to Bogle.*)

PAMELA. Alive! She slid down the banisters twice before I had





her half way up-stairs. But I fancy they must do something to the child to make her play, don't you?

BOGLE. Pamela, she wants some wine; can she drink?

PAMELA. Can she drink! She's a genius isn't she? Then of course she drinks.

BOGLE. But, my dear, if she should become intoxicated?

PAMELA. Geniuses don't—they only get inspired!

*(Bogle nods to servant with a humorous expression, and the servant goes out.)*

*(Crossing to Miss Mitts.)* Still eating, Lucinda? Couldn't you get enough down-stairs?

MISS MITTS. Eh—yes—but—I brought my ice up here where it is cooler; ices melt so quickly.

PAMELA. Not when you're eating them, my dear; they don't have the chance—but there! I like you for it. Sammy, get her another. O, here's the manager! *(as Jennings, a pompous, theatrical-looking person enters.)*

MISS MITTS *(recognizing him with a start exclaims aside.)* Peter! Peter Mitts turned up again!

JENNINGS. Ma'am, I thought I would come first to see if you were prepared for Seraphina.

MISS MITTS. I'm sure I'm bursting with impatience.

LADY IGGINS. And supper!

JENNINGS *(turning his attention to the piano.)* I wish the piano to face the south—the south you know is the land of music.

PAMELA. But it's quite out of the fashion. I should think you would much rather she faced the West end.

JENNINGS. O, no, madam, show your back to society and it will be all the more eager for you.

*(Pamela looks over her shoulder at her very décolleté waist.)*

PAMELA. Well, I'm sure, now-a-days, we're showing society as much of our backs as we're able.

SIR TIMOTHY. You might undertake to redress fashion's wrongs, ma'am.

PAMELA. Sir, I'm no ladies' maid, but a gentleman's widow. *(Aside.)* He's a very forward man, this.

MISS MITTS *(aside to Jennings.)* Be careful! don't you try to cheat Mrs. Podkins, she's too kind to me,—I'd expose you.

JENNINGS *(aside to Miss Mitts.)* A sweet greeting for a long lost brother, I must say! *(He turns to the guests.)* If you would all go out of the room, she might play better.

PAMELA. La! sir, but we couldn't see her!

JENNINGS. You would hear her, ma'am.

LADY IGGINS. Mercy! it's to see the child play that we're anxious.

JENNINGS. Ah! yes. Well,—*(looking about the room.)* There must be perfect harmony everywhere—everything must be in sympathy with her beautiful nature. *(In a lower tone, pointing to Miss Mitts.)* Will you kindly ask that lady to turn her face to the wall?

PAMELA. Certainly not! It would hurt her feelings—but I will ask my brother to stand in front of her, and she won't mind that.

JENNINGS. We are quite ready then. *(Going.)*

PAMELA *(going after him.)* Sammy, we're quite ready. Now, ladies and gentlemen—

*(Pamela goes out, followed by Jennings, who is followed by Bogle. The guests start talking loudly and all at once, with such remarks as "I wonder what's she like," "Have you ever seen her before," etc.—but suddenly hush into silence as Pamela returns, followed by Jennings, followed by Bogle, who brings Seraphina.)*



*(The guests draw in their breath admiringly.)*

*Seraphina walks to the centre of stage, turns her back slowly to the audience, looking at the guests, and curtsys.*

*The guests laugh pleasantly and applaud.)*

PAMELA. La ! bless her little heart !

*(Seraphina walks to the piano, and Jennings, helping her on to her seat, arranges its height, etc., and finally makes her comfortable ; she throws her arms around his neck and kisses him. All in the room involuntarily turn to each other and smile approval. Seraphina*

*settles herself to play, lifts up one hand high and strikes one key, looks up, shudders, drops her hands in her lap and swings herself around on the stool.)*

THE GUESTS *(all at the same time.)* What's the matter ? What is it ? Why doesn't she play ? etc., etc.

PAMELA *(going to her.)* The old piano must have hurt her,—they ought to pad the keys for a little child like that.

JENNINGS *(stopping her.)* Ma'am ; if you'll allow me, I understand her—it is only that something jarred upon her. *(He whispers to Seraphina, who whispers back, while Pamela hurries to Bogle and speaks to him, and he immedi-*



*ately stands in front of Miss Mitts. Everybody whispers wonderingly to everybody else, then everybody watches silently. Jennings speaks to Pamela, she speaks to Bogle, and he takes down the old portrait that hung on the wall facing Seraphina. Meanwhile Clarissa returns very quietly bringing Adolphus with her, and they take a retired position at back. Seraphina then pretends to play something very brilliant—a piano being played behind the scenes. At the conclusion, she slides down from the stool, shakes out her skirts and stands beside the instrument. All scream, applaud and laugh. Pamela rushes to her, takes her into her arms and kisses her.)*

PAMELA (*excitedly.*) La, blessums! I must kiss her! How do you do it? Did he teach you it all? Good gracious, child! you take my breath away! Kiss me again. (*Kisses her.*) I want her for my own, sir.

*(Bogle calms Pamela. Clarissa and Adolphus go out slyly.)*

SERAPHINA (*turning to Jennings.*) I'm so tired, can I go now? (*The ladies crowd around.*)

LADY IGGINS. Will you kiss me too, dear?

SERAPHINA. Who are you?

PAMELA. This is Lady Iggins.

SERAPHINA. O yes! then! I always am kissed by people with titles. (*Lady Iggins kisses her.*) And will you please sign your name in my book (*giving her a book.*) You will see the Duke of St. Paul's kissed me last. (*Lady Iggins signs.*)

PAMELA (*bringing up the Lady of Title.*) And here is another Lady of Title to kiss you.

LADY OF TITLE. I enjoyed hearing you play, heartily, my dear. (*Kisses her.*)

SERAPHINA (*pathetically.*) Did you, truly? I think some people don't care for the music and it makes it so hard to play. I am glad. You may kiss me two times, if you'd like to.

BOGLE (*bringing Miss Mitts.*) And here is Miss Mitts, to kiss you, Miss Seraphina.

SERAPHINA. No, I thank you sir, I have been kissed enough now.

BOGLE. That's hardly fair for Miss Mitts; she must surely be kissed by some one.

MISS MITTS. Oh—Mr. Bogle! Fie on you—not here, not here!

SIR TIMOTHY. She reminds me of Pauline—do you remember, Amelia, how you used to teach her to play my favorite airs on the treble?

LADY IGGINS. I do remember—I'm sure I ruined the shape of the girl's forefinger, it's all knuckles—the rest of her hand tapers beautifully.

PAMELA. The darling! Think how delicious to have a Prodigy like that for one's very own. I wish I could buy her.

JENNINGS (*bowing.*) Madam, with such a mother, prodigies are born, not bought.

PAMELA (*curtsying.*) La, sir!—your compliment's a baptism in itself. (*She goes to Seraphina by the piano.*)

MISS MITTS. Isn't she going to play again?

PAMELA. Are you tired, dear?

SERAPHINA. Yes, ma'am.

PAMELA. I don't think she'd better play again, if she's tired.

THE GUESTS (*remonstrating.*) Oh—oh—oh—Mrs. Podkins! etc.

LADY IGGINS. She isn't too tired to play just a little teenty weenty bit!



JENNINGS. She will play once more—come, Seraphina.

SERAPHINA. I will try, sir—

JENNINGS. If some one will give her a theme—she will improvise on it.

MISS MITTS (*hurrying forward.*) Yes, some one must! I will!!  
(*Miss Mitts sits down to play very angularly, but Seraphina shakes herself crossly.*)

SERAPHINA. No, (*wriggling*) her curls make me squirmy. (*Goes to Pamela.*) You, please.

PAMELA. La, blessums! (*Pamela plays a bar of an old tune and then leaves the piano. Seraphina sits on the stool, but throws her arms about Jennings' neck despairingly, and faints, falling over on the keys with a soft discord. All start slightly forward, while Pamela and Jennings run to her and hold her up between them.*)

MISS MITTS. She can't do it! I knew it!

JENNINGS. Madam, she can! and she shall!

PAMELA. No! she shan't play again. Lucinda, I'm ashamed of you—and of you too, sir (*to Jennings*). The poor little dear has fainted. (*Pamela takes the child up in her arms; the guests sympathetically murmur, and make a movement to go.*)

THE GUESTS. Oh—the poor little thing!

JENNINGS. Is she ill? Don't you think she'll be able to play this evening? (*anxiously.*)

PAMELA. She'll not play again this month, if I can prevent it. You'd better go at once for a doctor. Look how white she is. You've overworked her. You've worn her out, and you'd like to go on and kill her. Don't you consider how her poor little body needs tuning once in a while? You're a brute, sir! Ladies and gentlemen, excuse me, (*a curtsy*) I'm so mortified I'm purple.

*(Pamela goes out with the child. Jennings speaks to Bogle and goes out. The guests shake hands with Bogle and go out during Lady Iggins' speech.)*

LADY IGGINS *(wiping her eyes.)* Poor child, she oughtn't to play again for some time!

MISS MITTS. I believe she was putting it all on; I've had the care of too many children to be deceived.

LADY IGGINS. Lucinda Mitts!—you cat! Thank heaven, you haven't the care of my children.

MISS MITTS. Your offspring, my dear, have to take care of themselves.

LADY IGGINS. I'm happy to say they're able to. *(She curtsys to Bogle. Sir Timothy, following her, bows to Bogle.)*

*(To Bogle.)* Her poor little brats think Heaven's a place they are not rapped on the knuckles, and no one says—"don't do that."

*(Sir Timothy and Lady Iggins go out.)*

MISS MITTS *(to Bogle.)* Won't you wend your way down to Margate soon? I get so lonely sitting on the sands by myself.

BOGLE. You must be a good sailor, Miss Mitts; you wouldn't think it, but it would make me quite sick to sit by the water with you!

MISS MITTS. I would be there to nurse you!

BOGLE. But think how one looks when one's ill.

MISS MITTS. What of that? Love is blind! O! what have I said? *(Putting her hands to her face, she runs out of the room on her tip toes.)*

BOGLE *(laughs, watching her go out.)* Does she think she has me in her net? I'm much too old a fish for that.

*(Clarissa comes in.)*



CLARISSA. Uncle Sammy, Ma wants you up-stairs; the doctor says the Prodigy must have a long rest.

BOGLE. Great Jupiter! I'm afraid she'll not get that medicine out of a manager! (*He goes out, leaving Clarissa alone.*)

CLARISSA (*going to the closet.*) Come out, Adolphus! (*Todd comes out, wiping his face, evidently very warm from his confinement in the closet.*)

TODD. My Pandora!

(*Edward Hamilton, a handsome young "Buck" of the day, comes in.*)

CLARISSA (*delightedly and forgetting Todd.*) O! Mr. Hamilton, then you *have* come!

EDWARD. I have been waiting on the second landing two hours and forty minutes, Miss Clarissa!

(*Todd, unnoticed, fidgets about nervously.*)

CLARISSA. Truthfully? I sent a servant several times to discover if you were there, and he said you were not.

EDWARD. I was afraid Mrs. Podkins suspected something and sent him, so I hid every time I saw him coming.

CLARISSA. Why? Ma likes you.

EDWARD. Yes, but she has forbidden my speaking to you now until she gives me permission.

TODD. Clarissa!

CLARISSA. O! I forgot all about you, Mr. Todd. (*Talks to Todd.*)

EDWARD (*aside.*) What a fool I was to promise her mother I wouldn't make love to her. For all I know this young coxcomb might run off with her under my very nose.

CLARISSA (*to Todd.*) Good-night!

TODD (*reproachfully.*) Good-night—but when will we meet again?

CLARISSA. I don't know, perhaps never!

TODD (*fiercely.*) Coquette!

CLARISSA. I'll send you a billet to-morrow.

TODD. Will you make it *doux*?

CLARISSA. Yes, a *billet-doux*. Good-night.

TODD (*takes three steps and makes a bow,—aside.*) This is encouraging. She's got two strings to her bow! and supposing this loop should be the noose that gets the girl's money. (*He goes out for good.*)

EDWARD. Yes, Miss Clarissa, there is something I want to tell you, but I've given my promise to another.

CLARISSA. I hope it was not to Miss Evelina Titters?

EDWARD. Oh, no! she's only *pour passer le temps!* I want to—that is—you see I can't say it, but, well—O!—when your mother tells you, promise me you'll say yes—that you'll consent?

CLARISSA. O! Mr. Hamilton! I don't—understand you! and I question if you know yourself what you're talking about.

EDWARD. Yes I *do*, and so does your mother; and you will know some time, that I—I—but I musn't tell you, and I musn't stay now,—so good-bye. (*Passionately*) Clarissa! (*Recovering, dignifiedly*) Podkins,—Miss. (*He bows, Clarissa curtsys, and he goes out.*)

CLARISSA. Good-bye! (*She follows him to door, and seeing Pamela enter from her room, hurries out after him.*)

PAMELA. I'm glad the child's better, but she's too delicate for her position; I'm afraid she'll lose it, poor dear,

SERVANT (*enters.*) Mr. Serious, ma'am.

PAMELA. Show him up, James, show him slowly, take two or three minutes at it, James.

SERVANT. Yes, ma'am. (*He goes out.*)

PAMELA. I'm sure I must be a fright with all this flurry I've had, and I hoped the next time I saw Mr. Serious, to make a becoming impression and perhaps draw him out. (*During her speech, she hurries to a chair at the side and stands upon it to see herself in a mirror high on the wall there. She takes off a false curl of hair and pins it on in another and more becoming place, keeping a sharp lookout all the time, but is finally caught by the Servant, who enters followed by Algernon Serious, an attractive, warm-hearted, middle-aged gentleman with a mild manner. The Servant walks straight*





*down the room, failing to see Mrs. Podkins, then turns and sees her on the chair; he starts back in astonishment, but controls himself and bows.)*

SERVANT. Mr. Serious, ma'am. *(He goes out, with difficulty controlling his laughter.)*

*(Pamela turns, sees Serious, and gives a slight scream.)*

PAMELA *(on the chair.)* O—Mr. Serious! La! how awkward!

SERIOUS *(bowing.)* Not at all, ma'am, most graceful—you are like a beautiful statue, and I envy the pedestal.

PAMELA. I'm thankful to say I don't look like most statues—not at this time of day. *(Serious gives her his hand and helps her down from the chair. He kisses her hand.)*

PAMELA *(with a curtsy.)* Sir—no diamond on my finger is so precious to me now as the jewel you have this moment placed there. *(Turning aside with her back to him, she kisses her hand.)*

SERIOUS. I'm sorry to be too late for your party, ma'am.

PAMELA. La! Mr. Serious, I quite forgot, I intended to be very angry with you.

SERIOUS. That would be unjust. I was obliged to give a music lesson at the hour, and was unable to postpone it. I dare not incommode my patrons, even at the risk of offending my goddess—

PAMELA. No blasphemy, please, Mr. Serious.

SERIOUS. I am a poor music teacher, you know, ma'am; my pupils are few, and their lessons are my livelihood.

PAMELA. If I were not too old, I should ask you to improve on any talent that I may have for the piano.

SERIOUS. No lady is ever too old, ma'am. Now-a-days, age with women is obsolete. Children grow—a girl matures—a woman only dies. *(He bows.)*



PAMELA. And men?

SERIOUS. O, we do what the women please to have us.

PAMELA. I vow that's a fabrication. But if I'm not proficient at the piano, I can play the harp, and I can sing too. I assure you my voice was very much admired by Mr. Pod—ahem—once. (*Aside.*) I'll make him press me to sing, and then see if I can charm *his* breast with music.

SERIOUS. Sing to *me*?

PAMELA. Shall I?

SERIOUS (*with a bow.*) Do, ma'am.

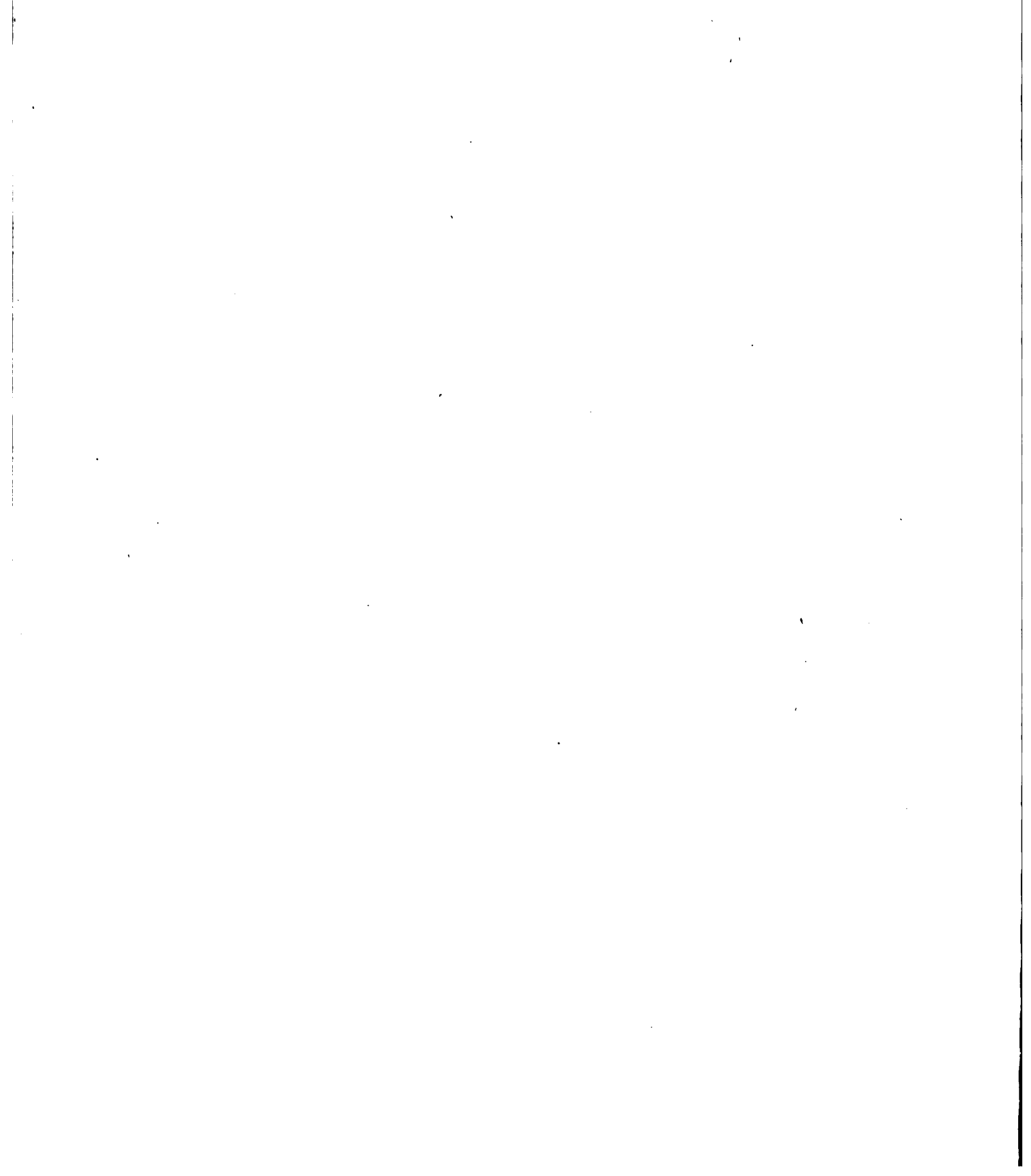
PAMELA (*aside.*) I think he's pressed me enough. My heart tells me to sing, and I will. (*To Serious.*) If only I can remember anything. (*They move the harp forward together.*) It's some time since I sang. (*Putting her foot on the pedal of the harp, she accidentally puts it down upon Serious's foot; he jumps slightly, there is a mutual embarrassment and apology.*)

Let me see. (*She strikes a chord—sings.*) "Three Blue Bottles"—(*Stops.*) No, I won't sing that,—that isn't exactly appropriate, is it? (*She strikes another chord—sings.*) "William and Mary met on the stile—" (*Stops. Aside.*) La! that was Mr. Podkins's favorite; I musn't sing that. O, I know! (*She sings.*)

"'Twas a rose-filled night in June,  
As we dreamed beneath the moon,  
His arm—was—well—just—you know where,  
And his breath was on my hair;  
He whispered low these words to me—"

(*She stops singing.*) La! I forget that line. (*Sings.*) "Tum-tiddy, tum-tiddy, tum-tiddy, tee!" (*Stops singing.*) I'm afraid you think this is very silly.





SERIOUS. No, no, ma'am.

PAMELA (*sings.*) "He gazed at me, his eyes were brown."

(*Stops singing.*)

Your eyes are brown. (*Sings.*)

"Tum-tiddy, tum-tiddy, tum-tiddy down!

The moon was rising o'er the trees,

As he gave a gentle squeeze

And whispered low these words to me —"

PAMELA (*stops singing.*) O! Now I remember that line!—

(*Sings emphatically.*) "I'll love you, if you'll love me!"

(*Serious has become nervous and embarrassed.*)

SERIOUS. Madam — I — I must leave you.

PAMELA. La! I'm sorry I sang. (*Aside.*) Does the man love me or does he not?

SERIOUS. Your song has awakened the old, old tune which has been slumbering in my heart.

PAMELA. Well, trust your heart, sir, I always do.

SERIOUS. I am a poor man, Mrs. Podkins.

PAMELA. You ought to marry a rich wife, sir!

SERIOUS. I would never — unless I loved her.

PAMELA (*very quietly and edging up to him.*) Don't you think you could find a rich wife who would be lovable?

SERIOUS. I have found one — (*Pamela gasps and holds her heart down with her hand on her bosom, thinking the proposal is coming*) — but I would not ask her to marry me, unless I could offer her a home — you understand? I think you do — good-bye. (*He bows, she curtsys, he goes.*)

PAMELA. La, Mr. Serious, we must make you wealthy, somehow.

*(Serious turns back, coming toward her.)*

SERIOUS. There is another stumbling block in the way of my marrying.

PAMELA *(frightened,—aside.)* Is a thunderbolt going to strike me?

SERIOUS. I am a married man, ma'am.

PAMELA. You!! *(aside.)* It has struck.

SERIOUS. A widower—

PAMELA. Oh! *(aside with a sigh of relief.)* Blow not fatal!

SERIOUS. And the father of a little child. *(Going.)*

PAMELA. What! and you've always said you were a music master!

SERIOUS *(turns.)* I am that also.

PAMELA. La! how versatile you are!

SERIOUS. My child was stolen from me four years ago! and I have been searching for her ever since and hoping to find her.

PAMELA. You must let me help you. Why haven't you told me before?

SERIOUS. I didn't wish to burden you with my troubles.

PAMELA. Sir, that's what we women were made for,—to make up to men for their other troubles! If I can help you, let me know.

SERIOUS. Thank you—good-bye, ma'am. *(He bows, Pamela curtsys, and Serious goes out.)*

PAMELA. An amazing sweet man, that, and it looks as if he loves me. But he's as proud as he's poor. If I could only make him rich somehow. There are great many ways, but la! they're so uncertain!

*(Bogle comes in with Jennings.)*

BOGLE. Pamela! the doctor says the Prodigy must have a complete rest by the sea. How about Margate?



PAMELA. Yes, Mr. Jennings, I've a home for orphans at Margate, where I can promise you she'll be well taken care of, if you'll let me have her, which is more than I could feel sure of if she remains with you.

JENNINGS. I'm afraid the expense, ma'am—

BOGLE. Had you rather kill the goose that lays your golden eggs? (*Going.*)

PAMELA. Don't call the poor child names, Sammy. (*Bogle goes out.*) The expense will be mine, sir, and gladly, if I can only give the child health.

JENNINGS (*starting to sit down.*) Thank you—

PAMELA. Don't sit—stand.

JENNINGS (*rises suddenly before he actually sits.*) Thank you!

PAMELA. And don't thank me. I blame you for half killing the Mlle.—what do you call her?—and ruining my party.

JENNINGS. Madam, I suffer most. She's the sensation of the hour. I was negotiating for her to go to America in a few days. It's like losing a million right through your fingers.

PAMELA. And you were afraid of the expense of sending her to Margate—you're a wise man, Mr. Jennings.

JENNINGS. You flatter me—

PAMELA. I didn't intend to.

JENNINGS. I had engagements for her every day. She was to play before His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, the day after to-morrow.

PAMELA. La! I know that! That's the reason I had her. Their Royal Highnesses don't have a thing money can buy that I don't

get, I can tell you! I'm being painted now as a shepherdess by that artist—what do you call 'um?—who daubed the Princess last week.

JENNINGS. You can't realize what it means to me to lose the Prodigy—to me—who made her!

PAMELA. La! Mr. Jennings, I'd give the Lord some credit.

JENNINGS. I'd give—five—ten thousand pounds to have Seraphina well to-morrow, or another child to take her place.

PAMELA. What's that to me! You'd better give half of it to making this one well and happy—wait a minute! Ten thousand—you will give it! Sit down. (*She pushes him into chair. Aside.*) I've got an idea and so big I'm afraid something will happen! (*Walking up and down.*)

JENNINGS (*aside.*) I wish I could make a matrimonial contract with the widow. She wouldn't make a bad Prodigy herself, from a financial point of view.

PAMELA (*walking up and down, aside.*) I've got it! If I can furnish Mr. Serious with a Prodigy to lend to Mr. Jennings, he can make some of this fortune, and then when he's made it—well, we shall see! (*Stops.*)

JENNINGS. Well, ma'am?

PAMELA. You're in earnest?

JENNINGS. Certainly, ma'am.

PAMELA. Very well, then, write it on paper, that you'll give ten thousand pounds, make a—er—thing-a-my—you know—contract. And if it's a possible thing, I'll get you a Prodigy for the day after to-morrow. Do it! Will you?

JENNINGS. Certainly, ma'am, but—

PAMELA. We've no time for buts—get up! (*Pulling him out of*

*chair.*) Leave Seraphina to me—Mr. Bogle shall take her to Margate; you go home and make out the paper.

JENNINGS. Madam, you take my breath away.

PAMELA. Would you rather I took your money? but you shall have that and your Prodigy!

JENNINGS. Madam, your servant! (*Bows.*)

PAMELA. Yours, sir. (*With curtsy. Jennings goes out.*) Where shall I look for it first?—Ah, ha! I know! I may have a Phenomenon here in the house for aught I know! *Clarissa!* why shouldn't she be one? My heart tells me to try Clarissa, and I will! I'll lend her to Mr. Serious for a year—or—at least till—the happy day. (*Calls*) Clarissa! I'll get Mr. Serious here again to-morrow to try her at the piano, and if that won't do, I'll get that dancing master who lives below here to try her at dancing—(*Calls*) Clarissa!

(*Enter Marie.*)

MARIE. Do you want me, ma'am?

PAMELA (*bringing chair forward to centre of the stage.*) No—Clarissa! where is the child? (*Enter Clarissa.*) O, here you are, you darling—your Ma's got such a plan!

CLARISSA (*pleasantly.*) Yes, Ma! (*Aside.*) She's going to tell me what Edward spoke of.

PAMELA. Kiss your Ma, dear—(*kisses her*)—I'm so proud of you! stand up on that chair, sweet. (*Clarissa demurs.*) Marie, the scissors. (*Marie hands her the scissors. Sharply to Clarissa.*) Stand up on that chair, miss! (*Clarissa gets up on chair, unwillingly.*)

CLARISSA (*nervously.*) Don't make me do this, Ma! (*Aside.*) Edward said to consent—I consent, Ma!

(*Pamela starts to cut off the two lower flounces of her dress.*)

PAMELA (*walking around Clarissa as she cuts.*) Consent! Of



course you consent! Marie, tell Mr. Bogle to come here and see what I've got. (*Marie goes.*)

CLARISSA (*getting hysterical.*) Ma!!!—what are you doing, Ma?

PAMELA (*cutting.*) I'm making a Prodigy of my own! You're old enough to do something prodigious, I'm sure!

CLARISSA (*hysterical.*) Ma! Ma! I'm too old!

PAMELA (*cutting.*) You're no such thing!

CLARISSA (*hysterical.*) Am I going to be married, Ma? (*crying.*)

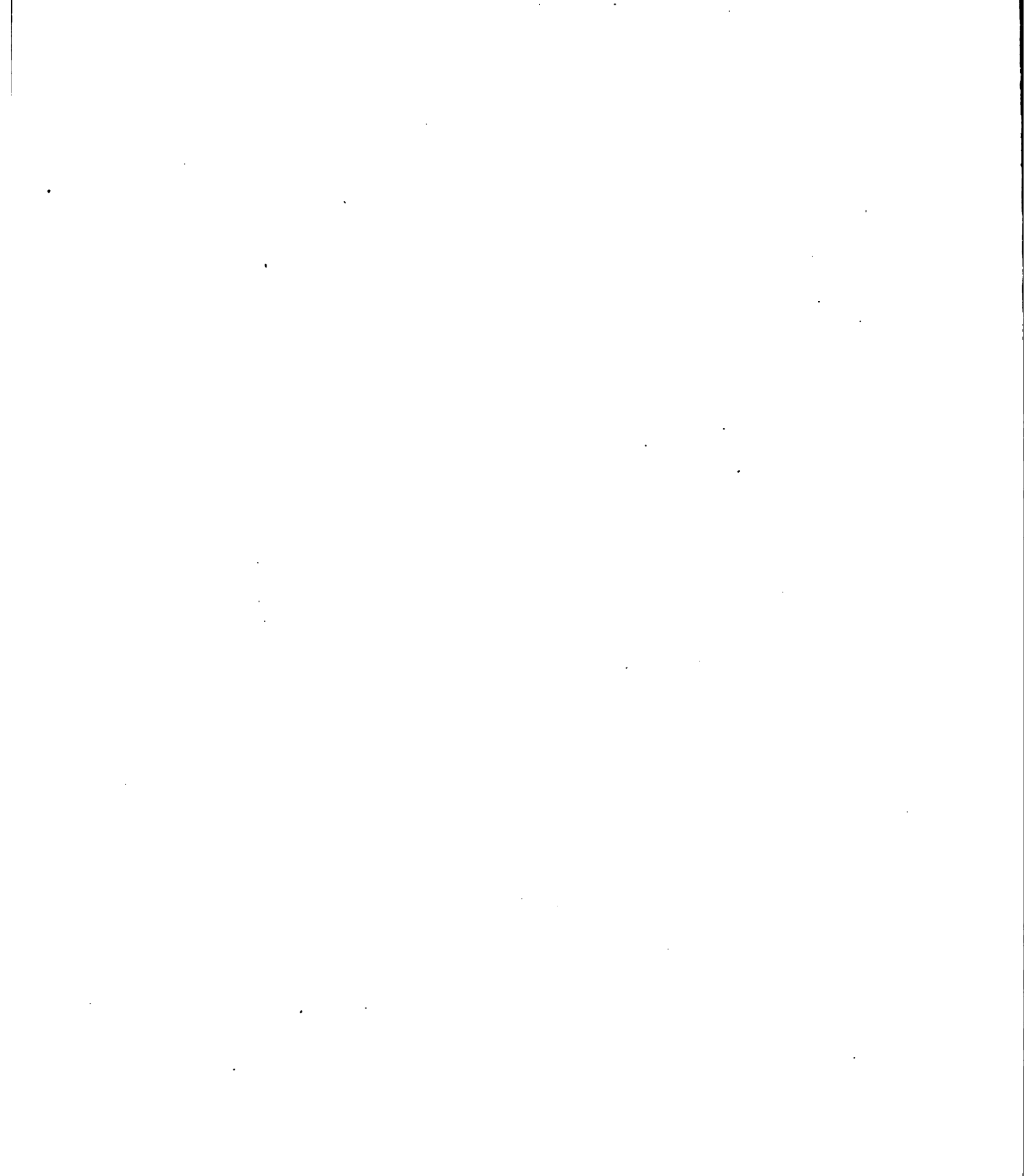
PAMELA (*cutting.*) Never! at least not for a year! Good gracious! each flounce of your skirt takes a year off your age! Lucinda Mitts would wear her frocks to her knees to accomplish the same! (*Having cut the two flounces entirely off, she stands aside to see the effect. Bogle comes in with Marie. Bogle is struck with astonishment. Pamela is delighted.*) Sammy! voila! voici! Behold! My Prodigy!

(*Clarissa stands on the chair in hysterics—her skirts are cut off, her flounced pantalettes showing, buttoned about the ankle.*)

#### THE CURTAIN FALLS.









## THE SECOND ACT.

*The music room at Mrs. Podkins', the following morning.  
Clarissa is heard playing scales off the stage through the scene  
until her appearance. Miss Mitts is shown in by the servant.*

---

MISS MITTS. Somebody's at the piano in the next room. (*Trics to peep in doorway.*) Mr. Bogle is a musician, perhaps it is he,—how sweetly he plays. (*Turns away suddenly, as Pamela enters with a large morning cap over her hair.*)

PAMELA. Good morning, Lucinda.

MISS MITTS (*looking about her.*) My dear, these rooms are even finer by daylight.

PAMELA. They do look very costly, don't they?

MISS MITTS. Who did 'em?

PAMELA. I don't know except the man said a Mr. Louis Seize did the furniture. I will tell you what I want. You go back to Margate on the noon coach, don't you?—I hope you aren't tired of the sea.

MISS MITTS. O, no, I'm a perfect mermaid! Really I often comb my hair on the sands and—

PAMELA (*interrupting.*) Lucinda, I blush for you! I hope there's nobody present.

MISS MITTS. I love to sit on the shore and watch the waves break at my feet.

PAMELA. You ought to have a *man* break there once,—you wouldn't care so much for a *wave*!—I sent for you this morning to take a child home with you.

MISS MITTS. Mercy! have you got another foundling?

PAMELA. Say orphan, it sounds better. No, it's the Prodigy.

MISS MITTS (*surprised.*) What! The one who played last night?

PAMELA. Yes, she's to stay in the Asylum a week or more till she's well again; and you must be particularly nice to her, Lucinda; she isn't to touch the piano, and I'm coming myself to-morrow to see how she's getting on.

MISS MITTS. I'm sure I'll do my best for the little dear. (*Aside.*) I'll pay the child back for her impudence when I get hold of her.

PAMELA. We must wait for her manager, but I will bring Seraphina now. (*She goes to leave the room.*)

MISS MITTS. O—er—is that Mr. Bogle at the piano?

PAMELA. No! That's *little* Clarissa! She's just finishing her third hour! Here's Sammy. (*As Mr. Bogle comes in.*)

BOGLE. Ah, ha, Miss Mitts, one of the early birdies! (*Miss Mitts curtsys, laughing aloud. Bogle continues to Pamela, who is going.*) Don't leave me alone with her! (*With a nod toward Miss Mitts. Pamela answers him in pantomime and goes out.*)

MISS MITTS (*aside.*) I believe Mr. Bogle is only timid and doesn't know how to start the subject. (*To Bogle.*)

Have you heard the news of my old school friend, Miss Laggard? The dear girl is to be married in October.



BOGLE (*aside.*) The same old topic!

(*They both start as Pamela's voice is heard off stage in a high key.*)

PAMELA. Stop! stop!! I say! Clarissa!!! (*Pamela runs in.*)  
Sammy! Clarissa's played so long she's got the fidgets and can't stop!  
(*She runs out again followed by Bogle; Clarissa stops playing.*)

MISS MITTS. Always interrupted! Every love affair I have develops an anti-climax!

(*Pamela and Bogle bring Clarissa in between them, each holding her by a wrist. Her skirts are still cut off. Her face is twitching and her fingers move as if playing exercises.*)

BOGLE (*to Clarissa.*) You poor little idiot, why didn't you stop when you were tired?

CLARISSA (*tearful and still twitching nervously.*) I did try to, but I couldn't.

PAMELA. Never do such a thing again, no matter what I tell you!

CLARISSA (*calming down.*) I'm better now. (*They let go of her wrists and she walks from between them.*)

PAMELA. I'm glad of it! La! you've given me such a fright! Go to your room and lie down a bit, for you've a great deal to do to-day.

CLARISSA (*aside, going.*) I'll get Marie to take a note to Mr. Hamilton and tell him I hate this old Prodigy plan.

BOGLE (*joining Clarissa.*) Come along, my phenomenal infant!

CLARISSA. Please don't poke fun at me, uncle Sammy! (*They go out together, Bogle taking her "under his arm."*)

MISS MITTS (*speaking after them.*) Good-bye, sir! (*Aside.*) I begin to suspect Mr. Bogle does not really love me. I know what I'll do, I'll jilt him!

PAMELA (*calling at door.*) Tell Marie to make haste with the—  
O, you're here, are you!

(*Marie enters with Seraphina. Pamela takes Seraphina's hand and brings her forward to Miss Mitts. Marie goes out.*)

PAMELA. This is the lady, blessums, who is going to be kind to you down by the sea.

SERAPHINA (*curtsying to Miss Mitts.*) Good morning, ma'am.

PAMELA (*to Seraphina.*) Not ma'am, dear,—Miss.

MISS MITTS. You'll kiss me this morning, sweet?

SERAPHINA. No, I thank you, Miss, I have been taught not to kiss plain ladies.

MISS MITTS (*indignant.*) What!

PAMELA. She means without titles, Lucinda. (*She takes Seraphina to Miss Mitts. To Seraphina.*) I'm coming to see you to-morrow, Seraphina.

SERAPHINA (*to Pamela.*) Will to-morrow be a long way off?

MISS MITTS. No, indeed! To-morrow is here before you know it, but yesterday gets miles away in an hour.

PAMELA. If I were you, Lucinda, I would hang on to my yesterdays, your to-morrows are growing shorter and shorter.

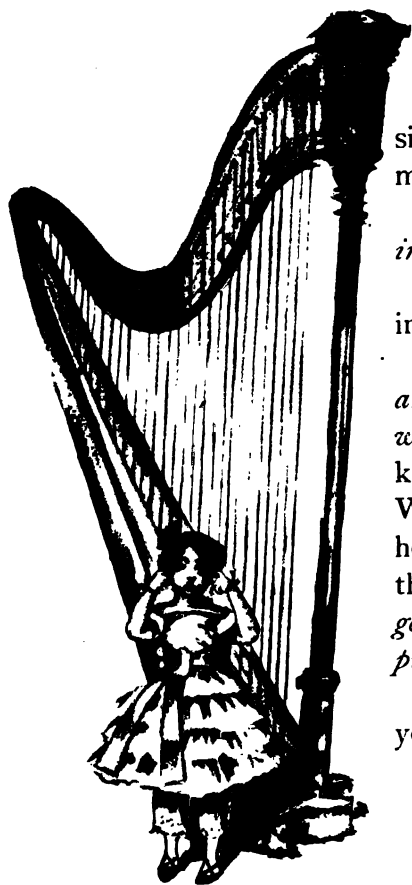
THE SERVANT (*announces aside to Mrs. Podkins.*) Mr. Jennings, ma'am.

PAMELA. Show him up, James.

MISS MITTS (*in a flutter, rearranging her bonnet and dress.*) O—dear. A visitor?—a gentleman?

PAMELA. La! no! only a theatrical manager, the one who owns the Prodigy. He's to go to Margate with you.

MISS MITTS. I'm sure I'll do my best to enliven the journey for him.



PAMELA. He won't let the child out of his sight hardly; you wouldn't think he had that much heart.

*(The servant shows Jennings in. Jennings bows in the doorway and bows again as he comes forward.)*

JENNINGS. Good morning, ma'am, good morning.

PAMELA. Good morning, this is— *(Miss Mitts and Jennings half bow as if they did not know whether to recognize each other or not.)* O! you know each other. La! I suppose an old flirtation. Well, Mr. Jennings, she has waited for you,—her heart is still free. *(Aside.)* I must leave 'em alone, that's only fair. Pray excuse me one moment. *(She goes out. Jennings seizes the Prodigy roughly and puts her away on the other side of the room.)*

JENNINGS *(to Seraphina.)* Put your fingers in your ears and don't you dare listen. *(To Miss Mitts.)* You silly old thing! so you nearly exposed me!

MISS MITTS *(whimpering.)* I didn't mean to; and I haven't yet,—she needn't know you're my brother!

JENNINGS. No, you must swear I'm an old sweetheart whom you once said "no" to.

MISS MITTS. Nobody would believe that; you'd have to be the one who was unwilling;—I thought you were in America.

JENNINGS. I came back as soon as it was safe to, and took the child to Germany to study.



MISS MITTS (*starting.*) Is that—(*pointing to Seraphina*)—the same child you kid—

JENNINGS (*pulling her arm.*) Hush, don't talk about things you don't understand. Of course it's the same child,—what if it is?

MISS MITTS. Mrs. Podkins knows her father—the music master.

JENNINGS. Serious? She does?

MISS MITTS. Yes!

JENNINGS. And you; what are you doing here?

MISS MITTS. I'm in charge of the Asylum at Margate.

JENNINGS. YOU! What good fortune! You'll take good care of her for me, won't you, Lucy dear? till I can get her away. I must have her out of reach of Mrs. Podkins as soon as possible, if this good lady is acquainted with Mr. Serious. I thought I was safe, giving only these private appearances; but these fathers are so demned far sighted!

(*Pamela returns.*)

PAMELA. Have you talked over old times?

MISS MITTS. Our times are not so *very* old, Mrs. Podkins.

JENNINGS. Miss Mitts was a sad coquette, ma'am. (*Takes Seraphina.*)

PAMELA. Hoity toity, Lucinda! Fie on you!

MISS MITTS. O, no, ma'am. But he's quite pleased to have me take care of little Seraphina. (*She takes hold of Seraphina's other hand; Jennings holds one. Miss Mitts and Jennings whisper to each other over the child's head.*)

PAMELA. I'm glad you've explained it to him! But I haven't asked you yet,—have you brought the contract, sir?

JENNINGS. Have you found the Prodigy, ma'am?

PAMELA. La! yes, I think so; but I'm going to make certain this morning.

JENNINGS. Very well, ma'am, here is the contract. (*Bringing out the paper with a flourish.*)

PAMELA. Is it all right? No hokus-pokus about it, is there?

JENNINGS. It is a manager's contract, ma'am; it is above reproach (*showing it to her*), and here is my speech, you see, which I have signed, promising to give ten thousand pounds for the use of a Prodigy for the remainder of the season, with the privilege of a renewal for next.

PAMELA. Beautiful, isn't it!

JENNINGS. Then underneath is your speech which you are to sign—

PAMELA. La? I shouldn't like to sign all my speeches!

JENNINGS. Granting me absolute control of the Prodigy.

PAMELA. O, that's for some one else to sign—the person who will actually furnish the child!

JENNINGS. But I thought you—

PAMELA (*interrupting.*) No, I'm only finding it for you.

JENNINGS. I see. Then she is to sign instead of you.

PAMELA. Yes, *he* is to sign and you are to pay *him*. (*Aside.*) I wish they would go! I want Mr. Serious when he comes to find me solitary; I'll give them a hint. Good-bye.

JENNINGS and MISS MITTS (*starting.*) O—er—good-bye!

(*The three start to go.*)

JENNINGS. I will take the contract to Margate with me.

PAMELA. Certainly! and I will bring the new Prodigy to-morrow. (*She goes to Seraphina.*)

JENNINGS (*aside.*) And I will see if there's a packet boat going to America, and if there is I'll be off on it with Seraphina and let Mrs. Podkins and the new child go hang!

SERAPHINA (*a little tearful.*) I don't want to go. Good-bye, dear ma'am.

PAMELA. Only until to-morrow, blessums!

(*Jennings and Miss Mitts go out with Seraphina between them. Pamela is left alone. She rings for Marie.*)

PAMELA. It must be time for Mr. Serious to come!

(*Bogle returns. Pamela greets him disappointedly, as she wishes to be alone. Marie enters.*)

PAMELA. Marie, bring my toilette things down here, I haven't time to go up-stairs. (*Marie goes out and Bogle sinks comfortably into a chair.*)

PAMELA. Where are *you* going now, Sammy?

BOGLE. I? Nowhere!

PAMELA. La! then please do go somewhere; Mr. Serious is coming and I'm afraid you'd only embarrass him.

BOGLE. O, I'll go when he comes.

(*Marie brings in various toilette articles in her apron.*)

MARIE. Where, madame?

PAMELA. O—on the piano. (*Going to the piano. Marie stands behind her.*)

BOGLE. What's this? Your toilette!!!

PAMELA. Just a finishing touch, Sammy!

BOGLE. Here! at this time of day! O, you women! It's never too late for you to mend! In the Mall, in the theatre, in chapel, you are never so thoroughly dressed, it seems, that a hitch up or a pull down somewhere, won't help matters!

PAMELA (*sitting by the piano.*) O! you're such a tease, Sammy! go away; it isn't proper! (*Looking among the toilette things.*)

BOGLE. I'm your brother!

MARIE (*giggling.*) O—Mr. Bogale—

PAMELA. There! you're mortifying Marie! Do go away!! you fluster me so! Marie, you've forgotten something.

MARIE. O, oui! madame. (*Marie goes out hurriedly.*)

PAMELA (*who begins to use the toilette articles.*) Flighty thing! I believe she's been at the whisky; and if you don't stop worrying me, Sammy, I shall take to it myself. Hand me a glass!

BOGLE (*surprised.*) Glass of whisky?

PAMELA. No! stupid, a mirror! *that* glass! (*Pointing to a small one on the table. Bogle brings her the mirror, and standing behind her holds it before her; he leans over her shoulder and looks at her face in the glass.*)

BOGLE. You look bewitching enough to-day for fifty musicians.

PAMELA (*smiling.*) La! One's all I want to lead. I don't care for a whole orchestra; Sammy—kiss me. (*He kisses her.*) You don't think your sister's an old fool, do you? I can't help it, I know I ought to be past such nonsense, but I do care for him—a little!

BOGLE. I'm glad of it. God bless you, Pamela!

PAMELA. Thank you, Sammy! He's so proud, and I like him for it. You see, if Clarissa's a success and can fill the Prodigy's engagements, Mr. Serious can be her manager afterward himself and make his own fortune and then! well—ahem!—we shall see!

BOGLE. But isn't it rather hard on Clarissa?

PAMELA. Bless me! I never thought of that; but Sammy, she's so young, and besides she ought to be glad and proud if I make her a Phenomenon!

(*Marie returns with a powder puff and box.*)

BOGLE. Be careful you don't make her a silly, dear. (*He leaves her with Marie.*)

MARIE. Voila! madame. (*She starts to take off Pamela's cap.*)

PAMELA. Now make haste, girl, and give me a good head. (*Using the toilette articles.*)

THE SERVANT (*announces.*) Mr. Hamilton. (*Pamela starts and screams slightly as Hamilton enters.*)

PAMELA. You must excuse me. Mr. Hamilton, I'm not at home, I'm out.

EDWARD. But please mayn't I see Miss Clarissa?

PAMELA. No, she's out! Can't you see, we're all out!!

EDWARD. At least I wish your permission to tell her I love her to-day.

PAMELA. Nothing of the sort, sir. Nothing of the sort! I'll tell her myself—when the time comes! We're all going to Margate to-morrow; you can see her there if you'll join us.

EDWARD. I will go to Margate to-morrow with pleasure, ma'am, but—

PAMELA. Good-morning!

EDWARD. But you won't forget, will you, that you promised Clarissa to me?

PAMELA. La! did I? Good gracious! It seems as if I was always promising the girl to somebody or other—well, you must all wait! Good morning!

EDWARD. Wait! till when?

PAMELA. At least—till I'm married.



EDWARD (*astonished.*) Good—

PAMELA (*prompting him before he can say something worse.*)  
Morning!

PAMELA and EDWARD. Yes'm, morning. Good morning!  
(*Edward backs out.*)

PAMELA (*to James, off stage.*) James, don't show any one else in till I tell you. (*To herself.*) I wish Mr. Serious to see the effect—(*goes back to her seat at piano*)—but we don't wish him to see the apparatuses, do we, Marie?

(*Marie rattles off a French sentence in answer and goes on arranging Pamela's hair. Pamela uses the other various toilette articles, studying the effects in the mirror.*) Good gracious! Don't rattle on so, and talk English! It's all very well for me to speak French because I know what I'm talking about, but you've got that infernal accent!

MARIE. Mais, madame! it is the true French accent!

PAMELA. Is it? Pinch my cheeks some,—I look too pale.  
(*Marie nips her cheeks with her thumb and forefinger.*) Ouch! if you do it that hard I'll slap you!

MARIE. Will madame have a little rouge?

PAMELA (*hesitating.*) I don't know—(*eagerly.*) Would you?  
(*Hesitating.*) Just a trifle—La! I haven't any.

(*Marie takes a small box of rouge from her pocket.*)

MARIE. I will be most pleased to lend some of mine to madame.

SERVANT (*entering.*) Mr. Serious is here, ma'am.

PAMELA. Well, wait a moment, James. (*To Marie.*) There!  
(*with a final look in the glass.*) I've no time for more tittivating.

MARIE. But the rouge, madame!

PAMELA. He must bring the roses to my cheeks himself. (*Marie starts off. To Marie, excited.*) Good gracious, Marie, you dummy! Take away everything—quick! Don't stand there as if you were struck by lightning! (*Hurrying the toilette articles into Marie's apron which Marie holds up. Some of the things drop.*) And don't drop everything as if you were half witted—you aren't an imbecile, are you? (*Marie goes again, Pamela finds the powder puff left behind her.*) Here! Did you leave this to dust the keys with? Oh! you French! (*She throws the powder puff to Marie, who catches it.*) Now, go! (*Pamela turns her back on the two, coming forward and trying to calm herself. Marie kisses the powder puff and throws it to James, who catches it and kisses the puff just as Pamela turns around and catches him. Marie goes out hurriedly.*) What impudence! James, tell Mr. Serious he may come up now, but keep him a minute or two in the hall.

SERVANT. Yes, ma'am. (*He leaves the room.*)

PAMELA. La! now—I won't be caught again like I was yesterday. (*Looking toward the chair and mirror.*) Let me see—(*she takes a few steps about in the room.*) O—I know! I'll be sitting at the piano—(*goes to the piano*)—and let him surprise me in a becoming position—(*poses at the piano*)—and when I hear him coming—I'll run my fingers over the keys and pretend I don't know he's here. O—!

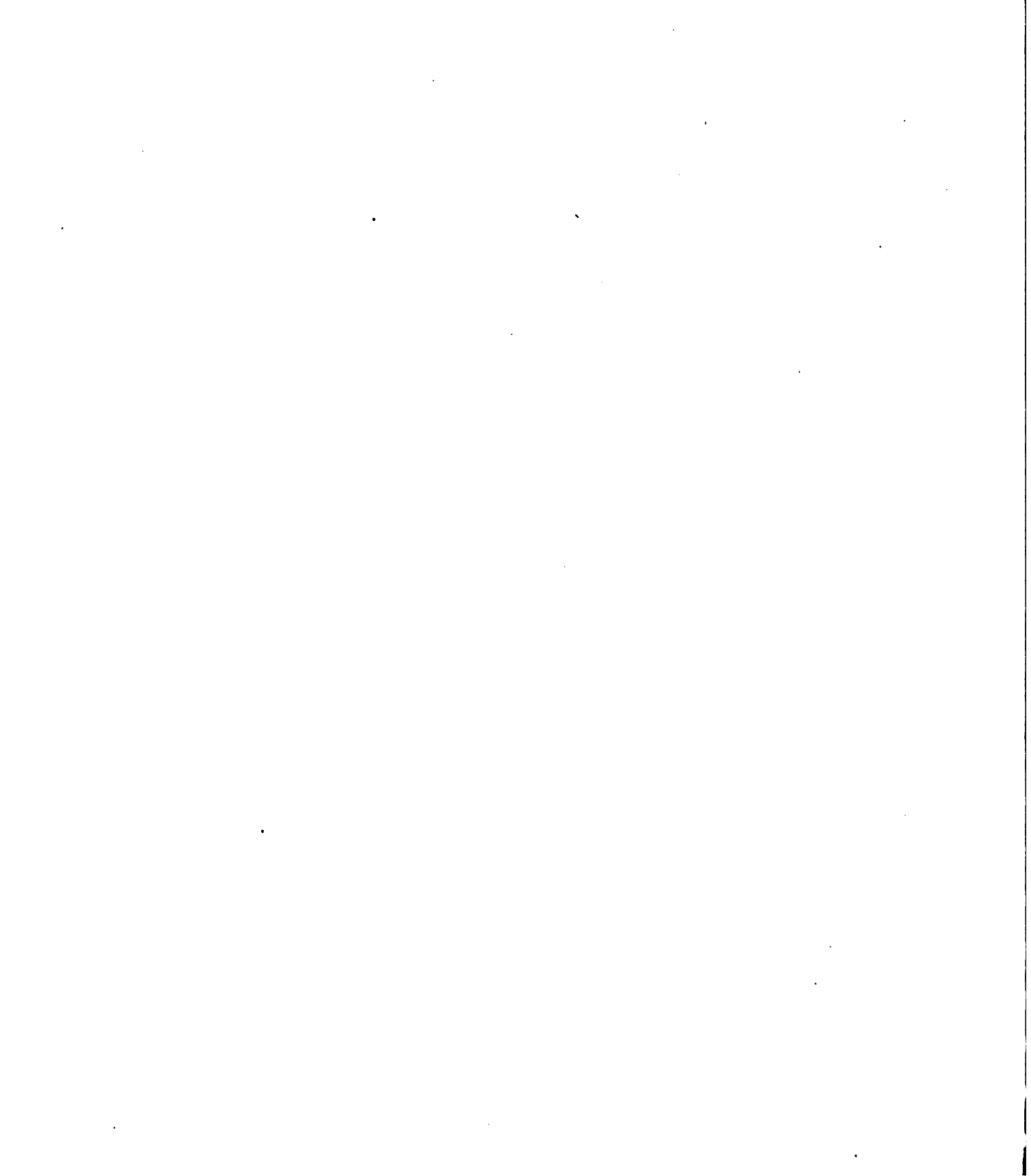
(*As Serious appears in the doorway, she runs her fingers over the keys and pauses with a languishing expression on her face.*)

SERIOUS (*stopping in the doorway, with admiration.*) An unconscious woman is a picture for the gods to paint!

PAMELA (*aside, pretending not to see him.*) What did he say about paint? (*as Serious comes forward.*) Oh-h-h-h—Mr. Serious, how you startled me! (*Rising.*)







SERIOUS. Don't rise, ma'am ; you realize the poet's words, "when music Heavenly maid was young."

PAMELA (*aside.*) La! I'm glad I chose this position. (*Coming forward to Serious.*) I hope sir, you didn't think it indelicate of me to send for you.

SERIOUS. I am afraid I thought it cruel, ma'am.

PAMELA. Sir!

SERIOUS. Yes, Mrs. Podkins, I determined when I went away from here yesterday that my visits must cease. I cannot trust myself to continue them.

PAMELA. Why, sir?

SERIOUS. You make me dream of a Paradise I can never realize ; you make me hope for a goal I can never reach. My mind is distracted from my duties so that I cannot perform them properly ; I must devote all of my time to my teaching ; I must go only to the homes of my pupils.

PAMELA. That's why I sent for you to-day, sir. (*Calls.*) Clarissa!

SERIOUS. What, ma'am?

PAMELA. Yes, I have a pupil for you ; one I wish made into a musical Prodigy—will you instruct her? (*Enter Clarissa in her short skirts. Pamela crosses to Serious. To him, aside.*) If she won't learn, please make her! (*To Clarissa.*) Come here, child, this is your music master—Mr. Serious. Sir, this is Little Clarissa, my Phenomenal daughter.

(*Clarissa hangs back abashed.*)

SERIOUS. Has the young lady ever studied, Mrs. Podkins?

CLARISSA. Yes, indeed, sir. For seven or eight years—but I could never learn ; I've no ear for music.

PAMELA. Your ears have nothing to do with it, have they, Mr. Serious? It's your fingers you play with, child.

CLARISSA. Well, Ma, you know my masters always said they were all thumbs on the piano.

PAMELA. Did they? It was very impertinent of them, I'm sure.

SERIOUS. Could she play something, ma'am, to give me an idea of what she can do?

PAMELA. Certainly, sir, she has one piece which she plays, and pretty well, too. Come, play your piece, Clarissa (*to her*) as well as you can, dear. (*To Serious.*) You won't mind her not exactly keeping to the time, will you? Clarissa never could count time.

SERIOUS. It is woman's privilege, ma'am, to let time pass without counting it.

PAMELA. O! you're so witty, Mr. Serious; I mean she can't count straight.

SERIOUS. I am used to that failing—I have been married, ma'am.

PAMELA. And what a nice husband you must have been.

CLARISSA (*interrupting.*) Well, now listen— (*Clarissa plays some old, well-known tune, flattening one note always, keeping no time and wabbling her wrists. Pamela and Serious stand by the piano, watching her. Serious is "on edge," and suffers during the music.*)

PAMELA (*proudly.*) Well, what do you think, sir?

CLARISSA (*aside to Mr. Serious.*) Please, Mr. Serious, I don't want to be a Prodigy.

SERIOUS. Madam, I don't think at all,—I know.

PAMELA (*proudly.*) Do you hear that, Clarissa?

SERIOUS. But I regret to say I cannot encourage any hopes for your daughter's proficiency on the piano.

PAMELA. Do you mean that, Mr. Serious? And the piano's so easy. Of course I feel sure you know, although I own I'm that dis-

appointed I could cry. (*Tearful.*) Clarissa, I'm ashamed of you!  
(*She sniffles.*)

SERIOUS. Ah! it is not your daughter's fault—she was not born a musician.

PAMELA. La! Mr. Serious, I trust you don't blame me for it.

SERIOUS. Blame could never rest on such shoulders. It would "fall like water off a—"

PAMELA (*interrupting.*) Come! come! Mr. Serious, no pet names, if you please.

SERIOUS. I mean if blame should touch their magic marble, it would be changed to praise.

PAMELA (*archly.*) Something has rested on these shoulders which was neither "praise" nor "blame."

SERIOUS. Tantalizer! But let me explain what I mean about your daughter. (*Taking hold of Clarissa's arm; Pamela is on the other side of Clarissa.*) You see, ma'am, she has not a musical hand. (*Holding her by the wrist he shakes her hand up and down gently, Clarissa letting it hang loose.*) It is neither flat—(*straightening it out*)—nor sharp—(*tapering the fingers with his own*)—nor yet quite natural. (*Holding the hand up with the fingers spread stiffly.*)

PAMELA. It's very likely she inherited all that from her father, sir, as his hand had been accidentally shot off when I married him and he always wore a wax one from Paris.

SERIOUS. That may account for it. Observe, ma'am, there are no harmonics in Miss Clarissa's knuckles. (*Bending her fingers up and down.*)

PAMELA. La! sir.

SERIOUS (*bending Clarissa's elbow.*) And no tempo in her elbows.

PAMELA. Pst! Pst! The poor child! Could a physician do her any good, sir? Would a surgical operation help her?

CLARISSA. Good gracious, Ma!

PAMELA. Well, I wouldn't have one, if it would! I want a Prodigy, but I love my daughter. (*Sighs.*) So we'll have to give up the piano, Clarissa. (*Clarissa runs the back of her hand over the keys from bass to treble and jumps down from the stool.*) You needn't be so pert, miss.

SERIOUS. How about vocal music, Mrs. Podkins? Does your daughter sing?

PAMELA. La! yes, she ought to, but she's so stubborn, the stupid child won't carry the tune. Do you want to hear her? You'll sing for the gentleman, won't you, Clarissa?

SERIOUS. No, no,—never mind. It wouldn't make much difference, ma'am, how far her voice carried, if she left the tune behind her.

PAMELA. Well! (*Takes a breath.*) The next thing we'll try will be dancing.

SERIOUS (*looking Clarissa over hopelessly.*) Dancing?

PAMELA. Yes, I've sent for a master to come this morning, in case she was a fizzle with you, sir. A man I've heard spoken of highly.

CLARISSA. Who, Ma?

PAMELA. Dodd—or—Todd—or—Podd, or some such fiddle faddle. I forget just what. Clarissa, you may go back to your room now.

CLARISSA (*aside.*) Good gracious! it may be Adolphus. (*She goes out.*)

SERIOUS. It is only left for me then to make way for my successor.

PAMELA. O, dear! must you go, Mr Serious? Won't you take Clarissa as a pupil?

SERIOUS. That would not be honest of me, when I know it is impossible for your daughter to learn. Ah, ma'am, I believe I am more disappointed than you. The prospect of coming here three times a week, with an extra lesson at the end of the series,—no extra charge—had something more than delighted me.

PAMELA. Within my bosom the same sentiments have been struggling for expression. Then do not cease your visits here, sir.

SERIOUS. Yes, I must devote what leisure I have from my duties to the search for my daughter. It is four years since she was stolen from me—but the sorrow, ma'am, is as fresh as if it were yesterday, and the loneliness lasts on.

PAMELA. My heart aches for you, sir—if we could only find her.

SERIOUS. I have now a clue.

PAMELA. A what?

SERIOUS. A clue—a hint as to where she may be.

PAMELA. Then we'll go and get her to-day!

SERIOUS. Ah, ma'am, this will be the seventeenth clue I have followed. I haven't much hope, but I have my work and I feel when I am busy with that I am doing my best to win fame or fortune to lay with my heart some day at a lady's feet.

PAMELA. You would have come here to instruct Clarissa?

SERIOUS. Then pleasure would have been in the same octave as duty, now the two must chase each other in an endless fugue.

PAMELA. Why not make your life a duet for four hands, sir?

SERIOUS. Ah, ma'am, my part would indeed then be the base accompaniment. (*He bows over Pamela's hand.*) Must I go—without some souvenir?

PAMELA. La! no, what shall it be?

SERIOUS. O—may I speak it?

PAMELA. Don't ask me to control your tongue, sir, my own is as much as I can manage.

SERIOUS. I should like—O, if I might—could I? A curl of your beautiful hair!

PAMELA. Certainly, sir. (*Putting up her hand, she starts to take off a false curl, but starts embarrassedly and puts it back*) er—that is—if—I had some scissors.

(*Serious takes a housewife from his coat-tail pocket and gets a pair of scissors from it.*)

SERIOUS. Oh—er—allow me, ma'am, I always carry one of these about with me—er—to mend any little emergency—a button sometimes will—

PAMELA (*aside.*) Happy button!

SERIOUS. Er—I mean, one can never tell, you know, what mayn't happen;—allow me. (*Offering the scissors to her.*) But can you really spare it?

(*Pamela turns away from him and loosens the false curl.*)

PAMELA. O—there are plenty more where this came from. (*She pretends to cut off the curl and then holding it away from him, on her other side, she cuts off the little tape end and hands the curl to him with the scissors.*) There, sir!

SERIOUS (*overjoyed and grateful.*) This is too much. (*He starts to go. Pamela turns, and, facing him, speaks after him.*)

PAMELA. Well, give back what you don't want. (*Aside.*) They cost a pound apiece.

SERIOUS. I meant I did not deserve a flower which grew upon so fair a garden.

PAMELA. O—sir!—(*with a curtsy.*) I—I think I'd better be truthful. (*Aside.*) He's sure to find it out some day. (*Aloud.*) I must confess—the posy was transplanted.

SERIOUS. Now it shall be engrafted here! (*Puts his hand on his heart.*) Your servant, ma'am. (*Bows.*)

PAMELA. Yours, sir. (*With a curtsy.*)  
(*Serious kisses the curl and backs out, plucking a loose hair from his lips. Clarissa comes in.*)

CLARISSA. Has he gone, Ma?

PAMELA. Yes, and I'm only afraid it's forever. (*Goes to the door and calls Marie.*) Marie! (*To Clarissa.*) O, if you'd only been a dutiful child and have played well, he might be coming to the house every day.

(*Enter Marie.*)

MARIE. Did madame call?

PAMELA. Yes, Marie. Does my hair look all right?

MARIE. Mais, non! Madame has lost one of her beautiful curls.

PAMELA. It shows, does it? I was afraid it would. I—er—gave it away, Marie—to the gentleman who was just here.

MARIE. Madame is so extravagant.

PAMELA. Well, pin on another, Marie, in the exact spot; he knows I'm a widow and it may delicately suggest to him that the places of those that are gone may be filled!

MARIE. Madame has so much of the sentiment.

PAMELA. Come along, girl, before the dancing man comes.

(*Pamela goes out, followed by Marie.*)

CLARISSA. I've made up my mind. I *won't* be a Prodigy and I *will* be married! I can't wait any longer for that dear Mr. Hamilton, although it comes near breaking my heart to forego all hopes of him. But I'll teach him and Ma a lesson. This old Prodigy plan is cruel. I couldn't be a Phenomenon if I wanted to, and I want to be just a woman and loved by Mr. Hamilton. I'd prefer that to anything else



in the whole wide world, but I won't be treated like a Doll Baby, so I'll elope with Adolphus as soon as ever he wishes it.

SERVANT (*announcing.*) Mr. Adolphus Todd, Miss.

CLARISSA. O—(*laughs.*) Show him up. (*Servant goes out. She remembers her short skirts.*) Good gracious, my skirts! (*Stoops down so they touch the floor.*) Well, I couldn't stay like that. (*Getting up, she runs quickly to the piano and stands with it between her and the door. Adolphus Todd is shown in by the servant. Adolphus carries a violin in a green baize bag and a big pink rose in a pasteboard box.*)

TODD. The fates befriend me! Mrs. Podkins desires instruction—it can't be in dancing, it must be in deportment. Well—five shillings a lesson,—stop—she is the mother of my wealthy love, ten shillings, no, demme, a guinea a lesson!

CLARISSA. How do you do, Adolphus? (*Laughing.*)

TODD. Clarissa!! (*Clarissa moves so as to keep the piano between them.*) Aren't you going to kiss me?

CLARISSA. No, Ma might come in.

TODD (*very boldly.*) Let her enter. (*Moving around the piano after her; Clarissa moves around the piano away from him.*)

CLARISSA. Stay where you are, Dolph! And promise you won't laugh when you see all of me; and I'll elope with you to-morrow!

TODD (*overjoyed.*) You will!! My Helen of Troy! (*Dances away.*) One, two, three, glide—one, two, three, glide—Where to? Clarissa! where to?

CLARISSA. I don't care; you choose the place—somewhere near, so we can return easily if I change my mind! (*Todd starts reproachfully.*) Yes, I, may, I'm only going to try it to-morrow, to see if I like it.

TODD. Clarissa!!!

PAMELA (*off stage.*) What does he look like?

CLARISSA. Sh!—Ma's coming back. I go to the museum with Marie at eleven in the morning; meet me there, and we'll slip off. (*Clarissa runs to chair and sits trying to pull her skirts down to her ankles. Pamela enters.*)

PAMELA. Good morning, sir—are you the dancing master?

TODD (*with a bow.*) No, ma'am, I am a Professor of Terpsichore.

PAMELA. Then you've made a mistake and come to the wrong house,—I don't want you.

TODD. Pardon me—my card. (*Holding it out he draws it back quickly. Aside.*) No, demme, "five shillings per lesson" is printed on that—I am Adolphus Todd, ma'am.

PAMELA. O—I thought you said you were somebody else.

TODD. Instructor in Deportment, Master of Calisthenics, and Professor of Terpsichore.

PAMELA. O—I see. I never was good at the languages.

TODD. I teach ladies the Art of walking gracefully (*mimics*) curtsying to Royalty (*mimics*), snubbing prettily (*mimics*), and stepping into a carriage with alacrity. (*Mimics. Aside to Clarissa.*) I'll teach you that to-morrow!

PAMELA. La! Clarissa, stand up, child; I'm sure you've nothing to be ashamed of—your hands are like your Pa's, I know, but so are your other limbs, and they were his chief attractions.

CLARISSA. O, Ma!



TODD. Yet, ma'am, the art of dancing defies the limitations of birth. One must be born with good brains, but the legs can be trained to be graceful.

PAMELA. I wouldn't care much for the grace unless you were born with 'em straight!

TODD. You know, ma'am, a curved line is considered one of beauty.

PAMELA. Well, we've no time for curves now. This is Little Clarissa, my Phenomenal daughter, sir. She is to be a dancing Prodigy and I desire you to give her a trial.

TODD. With pleasure, ma'am. (*Taking his violin and bow out of the bag.*) She shall learn my own Pas de Rose, which is described as being all movement without motion.

PAMELA. And if she's her Ma's child she can do it. When I was her age I could pirouette with the best of them, and on one occasion I kicked a gentleman's hat—

CLARISSA. Ma!!!

PAMELA. Off the floor at my feet where he'd placed it. What's the matter with you, child?

TODD (*taking the pink rose out of the box.*) Now, Miss Clarissa, you hold the rose so. (*Takes fancy dancing position, holding up the rose in one hand and an imaginary skirt in the other.*)

PAMELA. Most elegant—charming, etc.

CLARISSA (*aside.*) Don't Adolphus, you know I can't get that way.

TODD (*aside.*) I must, my darling; my reputation's at stake, and I can't let my art suffer. We begin slowly and stately, thus— (*Music. Todd dancing and playing on his violin.*)



One, two, three, four,—  
Step right and dip the rose.  
Same step, left side,  
*Encore le même chose,*  
Glissard back, then  
Run on your tippy toes,  
*Pas bas* forward,—  
Pirouette and pose.

*(Music stops. To Clarissa.)* Now,  
Miss, if you please.

*(Clarissa pouts and shakes herself.)*

PAMELA. Won't she do it? Clarissa, I'll pinch  
your arm.

CLARISSA. I can't, Ma.

PAMELA. There's no such word, silly!

TODD. Allow me. *(Todd poses Clarissa, she  
takes the pose awkwardly.)*

PAMELA. There are no curved lines there!  
What do you call that?

TODD. The first position—it represents Grace  
and Poetry.

PAMELA. I shouldn't have thought it.

*(Clarissa giggles nervously.)*

TODD *(aside to her.)* Don't giggle; you're hurting my feelings.

CLARISSA *(aside.)* You're hurting mine more!

TODD. The rose in the hand expresses Beauty.

PAMELA. La! How poetical! Let me hold the rose—I mean  
—er—to show her how.

TODD. In one moment, ma'am. Possibly she will take more

kindly to the quick movement. (*Clarissa loses her position. Pamela watches delightedly. Todd dances steps and ends with a comic pose.*) This is the last position.

PAMELA. And what does that represent ?

TODD. Elegant repose !

PAMELA. Go on, Clarissa !

TODD. Now, Miss Clarissa, if you please. These are, of course, the first simple steps—

CLARISSA (*trying to take the pose, awkwardly.*) I shall lose my balance.

TODD (*cunningly.*) If Mrs. Podkins could handle the bow I might place my arm on Miss Clarissa's waist to steady her.

PAMELA. I've had too much experience with the beaux in my time, sir, to permit you to steady my daughter.

(*Todd puts his violin in place and then takes it away again discouragedly.*)

TODD. Very well, ma'am, but I can tell before we start that your daughter was not born a dancer.

PAMELA. My dear sir, I've heard quite enough of what my daughter was not born—I think I ought to know as well as you, sir !

TODD. We will make the trial certainly, ma'am, if you wish it. Now Miss, once more, your position. (*Preparing to play. Clarissa takes the position awkwardly.*)

PAMELA (*aside.*) Try, do dear, real hard ; you don't know what your success means to me ; my happiness depends on it !

TODD. Come forward to meet me, taking the steps as I do. (*He draws his bow across his violin. A chord. Music.*) Now, ready. (*Todd dances the steps sing-songing the directions and playing his violin at the same time. Clarissa tries to imitate him but fails. Pamela is urging her on.*) One, two, three, four—

(*Music, Todd and Clarissa stop.*)

PAMELA (*very excited.*) O, no, not at all, not a bit like it! Try again.

TODD. Yes, I think she'll do better this time. (*Arranging Clarissa.*) She only needs a little grace and a little ear for music, and a small idea of dancing. Now, again! (*Music. Todd again starts his words and playing for the steps! Clarissa is hopelessly bad and breaks down at the end of the second line, when music and Todd also stop. Pamela meanwhile is in despair.*)

PAMELA. O, no! it's worse than ever! she can't do it! O! it's dreadful! stop!

CLARISSA. I can't do it!

PAMELA. You must! It's perfectly easy! Hand me the rose! (*Taking the rose.*)

TODD. What, ma'am, will you do a *pas*?

PAMELA. It won't be the first *pa* I've done and you'd better be careful, sir, or I'll do you—come on! Now watch me!

(*Todd fiddles. Music. Pamela takes the first pose and then dances. Todd sing-songs the same words and Pamela dances the whole dance. Todd applauds, rapping his violin with his bow. During the dance Bogle enters; he stands back astonished. Clarissa runs to him. Pamela finishes with the pose kneeling, one hand over her head, etc.*)

BOGLE. Great Jupiter, Pamela! Are you making a Prodigy of yourself?

(*Todd places his violin and bow on the floor before Pamela.*)

TODD. Madam, I lay my instruments, a laurel shoe here at these feet.

PAMELA. La! sir, your profession makes you prejudiced in favor of the lower extremities.

TODD. No, ma'am, it is not prejudice, but intoxication. Your feet have gone to my head! And such graceful slippers could only be guided by a noble heart!

PAMELA. I wish you could have made that speech to my daughter, sir.

TODD. It would be quite useless, ma'am, she never can dance. However, your next offspring may be a true Phenomenon!

PAMELA. La! it would have to be, sir; I'm a widow!

CLARISSA. I'm sorry, Ma.

PAMELA. Sorry! Don't come near me! You truly think she can't dance, sir! Well, I blush to say it, but I must own I agree with you, and it's so discouraging. (*Sighs tearfully.*)

TODD. My fee will be—

PAMELA. Good-bye, sir. (*Sniffles and turns aside.*)

TODD. Demme, does she think dancing lessons are given away? I will send in an account the minute I reach home! There are two

of them; I'll charge for two lessons, at—yes—two guineas each! four guineas net! Demme!

(*Todd goes out with a sly look and nod to Clarissa. Pamela begins to walk up and down the room.*)

CLARISSA. Ma, I'm sorry!

PAMELA. I know it, dear; it isn't your fault, it's your father I blame. But O, Clarissa, if you'd only been able to do some-



thing, you might have made me so happy. Go away, now, I want to think.

*(Clarissa leaves the room.)*

BOGLE. Sit down, Pamela.

PAMELA *(walking.)* I can't think sitting.

BOGLE. O, come, be serious—

PAMELA *(walking.)* La! ain't I trying to be—*Mrs.* Serious with all my might and main.

BOGLE. Try some other way,—abandon this absurd idea of yours.

PAMELA. What! *(Stopping in front of him.)* Abandon my Prodigy! never!! I'll get another one somehow. You know what it means. Wealth for Mr. Serious, and love and happiness for me. I'll not be discouraged till I've tried every child I can lay my hands on! male or female, it's all the same to me! White or black, I'm not particular!

BOGLE. Great Jupiter, Pamela, stop at the nigger!

PAMELA. I'll stop nowhere,—not till I get my Prodigy!

BOGLE. Be calm! Clarissa's a failure!

PAMELA. I won't be calm, Sammy! nor give up Mr. Serious because of one failure. *(She sits down at the desk and writes.)*

BOGLE. My dear girl, children don't grow on bushes.

PAMELA *(writing.)* Every day brings us more babies, and Prodigies may be among 'em. *(Rings a bell.)*

BOGLE. But it isn't likely you'll find them! You'll be the laughing stock of the town!—give it up!

PAMELA *(Sanding her note and doubling it three cornered.)* Never! *(Rings bell.)* We're going to Margate to-morrow! To begin with, I'll go through the whole orphan asylum. *(Rings bell, third time.)*

BOGLE. Great Jupiter, Pamela!



*(Marie appears.)*

MARIE. Did you ring, madame?

PAMELA *(with great sarcasm.)* Did I ring? Send this note to Mr. Serious at once. *(Marie goes out with note. To Bogle.)* I've asked Mr. Serious to go to Margate to help choose the genius.

BOGLE. And if you fail there?

PAMELA. I'll keep on trying;—my heart tells me I shall find him a Prodigy somewhere. *(She goes to the piano and sits before it.)*

BOGLE. But, meanwhile, Mr. Serious—?

PAMELA. La, I've thought of all that; I have decided in the meantime, *(striking three chords on the piano)* to receive daily instructions *(running up a scale)* upon the piano myself! *(Running down a scale! Bogle drops into a chair hopelessly.)*

THE END OF ACT II.





### THE THIRD ACT.

*On the sands at Margate. The sea is at the back. On the right hand side the cliff juts out, with the houses of Margate. On the left are some bathing wagons called in England "machines." As the curtain rises the nine orphans are discovered sitting on three-legged stools in a row in front of Miss Mitts and facing the sea. They are digging in the sand with big wooden spoons and shovels. Seraphina is among the orphans. Miss Mitts is reading from a small volume of Byron.*

MISS MITTS (*looking up from her book.*) Dear Byron!—Keep quiet, every one of you, or you'll be punished the minute we get home.—The nice part of reading Byron is, that if one loses one's place, one doesn't mind re-reading to find out where one left off—Clarinda, come away! if you go that near the water the bugaboo'll catch you! (*She looks down again and reads.*)

"Young Juan slept all dreamless;—but the maid,

"Who smoothed his pillow, as she left the den

"Looked back upon him, and a moment stayed."



(*She looks up.*) Roxana, come here! How dare you take off your shoes and stockings! I'll rap your knuckles, miss! (*Bogle comes along the sand. Miss Mitts, who is about to shake Roxana, on perceiving him, changes her manner, and kissing Roxana says:*) Go and play, dear.

BOGLE. Ah, Miss Mitts, are you playing the Siren on the shore, and making a Ulysses of Mr. Serious?

MISS MITTS. Nothing of the sort, sir.

BOGLE. Where is Pamela?

MISS MITTS. She's in the water—she dotes on bathing! For my part, I never could bear it.

BOGLE. Really now! Dear me! (*He goes to Seraphina.*) How is our little Prodigy to-day?

SERAPHINA. Happy, sir; I thank you.

BOGLE. Will you go for a walk with me?

SERAPHINA. If they will let me.

MISS MITTS. Of course, dear. (*She pinches the child's arm behind Mr. Bogle's back and tells Seraphina not to dare to tell the gentleman anything. Bogle and Seraphina disappear behind the bathing carriages as Jennings arrives on the scene, from the town.*)

JENNINGS (*watching them go away.*) Hello, what's this?

MISS MITTS. It is only that horrid Mr. Bogle.

JENNINGS. I've decided this is all too deuced risky. The first thing we know Mrs. Podkins will be taking the child up to town without our being aware 'of it, and the next thing her father would recognize her!

MISS MITTS. You wouldn't be so foolish, would you, as to let her slip through your fingers?

JENNINGS. Hardly! She's a fortune to the man who owns her.

I'm on the lookout now for the first packet boat for America. I'd go to-day if I could.

*(A glimpse is caught of Pamela in a bathing suit and a big hat hurrying into the bathing wagon from the water. Serious is seen approaching.)*

MISS MITTS. Peter! Here he comes!

JENNINGS. Who?

MISS MITTS. Mr. Serious.

JENNINGS. And Bogle may come back any moment with the child! you must get Serious away,—get him away at once, do you hear? I'll hunt for Seraphina. *(He goes away between the bathing machines.)*

SERIOUS *(Bowing to Miss Mitts.)* Pardon me! But is this Mrs. Podkins' party? I am Mr. Serious.

MISS MITTS. Yes, sir. I am Miss Mitts, Mrs. Podkins' friend. *(Aside.)* He seems a sweet man,—I shouldn't mind taking him away for good. I wonder if I could make an impression! I've heard he is a widower, but they're so unimpressionable; at least I have always found them so.

SERIOUS. Miss Mitts, you've lived a long time—

MISS MITTS. Oh! not so *very* long, sir!

SERIOUS. I mean—you ought to have had many experiences.

MISS MITTS. Yes, I ought to have had!

SERIOUS. Do you believe in second marriages?

MISS MITTS. Yes, sir, I *do*. I believe in *any* kind of a marriage!

SERIOUS. Thank you! Thank you!

MISS MITTS. Shall we take a bit of a walk?

SERIOUS. But Mrs. Podkins?—

MISS MITTS *(leading the way off.)* O, she asked me to please entertain you.



*(Serious follows her slowly, and not willingly. Miss Mitts reaches back after his arm and hurries him along. As they pass out of sight, PAMELA'S voice is heard in one of the bathing machines calling.)* "Where are you, chickabiddies?—are you ready?"

JEMIMA *(the biggest orphan, jumping up and down and clapping her hands.)* Here she comes! Here she comes! Fairy Godmother! *(All the children run to the bathing machine shouting.)* Hurrah! Here she comes! Fairy Godmother, hurrah! hurrah!

*(Bogle appears with Seraphina and they join the other children.)*

JEMIMA. She's coming out!

THE CHILDREN. Hurrah! she's coming out! she's coming out!!  
(*They all run toward the wagon.*)

(*Pamela appears on the top steps at the door of the wagon.*)

THE CHILDREN (*shouting.*) Fairy Godmother! welcome, Fairy Godmother! Fairy Godmother! Hurrah! Hurrah! (*They pelt her with flowers.*)

PAMELA. La, bless their hearts! Where's Mr. Serious? I told him to meet me early.

BOGLE. Mr. Serious has just gone off with Lucinda Mitts.

PAMELA. Has he! Well, I hope he'll come back safely, that's all! Chickabiddies, shall we have a game?

THE CHILDREN (*jumping up and down and clapping their hands.*) Oh yes! a game! a game!

PAMELA. Come along,—“Ring-a-Ring-a-Rosy!” Who'll be in the middle?

THE CHILDREN. You, Fairy Godmother! you!! (*The children make a circle around Pamela.*)

JEMIMA. And big Mr. Bogle!

THE CHILDREN. Yes, yes! big Mr. Bogle, too!

PAMELA. Come! be a rosy, Sammy? (*Bogle joins circle of children.*) Now, all ready? Emeline, take your fingers out of your mouth. All ready? Roxana, don't turn your toes in, dear; you'll tumble over yourself! Now!

(*The game. The children and Mr. Bogle dance in a circle round Pamela. All sing.*)

“Ring-a-Ring-a-Rosy,  
Pocket full of posy!  
All the girls in our town,  
Cry for little Josie.”

*(Jennings returns.)*

PAMELA. Here's Mr. Jennings! Come, join the game, sir!

JEMIMA. Him in the middle with Fairy Godmother!

THE CHILDREN. Yes! Yes!

PAMELA. Come along, Mr. Jennings!

*(Jennings joins Pamela inside the circle. All dance round in opposite direction for second verse. All sing.)*

“Ring-a-Ring-a-Rosy,  
Pocket full of posy,  
Round we go—Round we go!  
And all tumble down—Oh!”

*(At the last line all the children sit down suddenly on the ground.)*

THE CHILDREN. Kiss her! You must kiss her before you can come out!

PAMELA. La, if he did I'd slap his face!

JENNINGS. The kiss would be worth the charge, ma'am!—Seraphina. *(Seraphina goes to him.)*

PAMELA. What are you going to do with her?

JENNINGS. Take her back to the Home—she's tired. *(Aside to Seraphina.)* Say you're tired.

PAMELA. Are you tired, blessums?

SERAPHINA. Yes, ma'am.

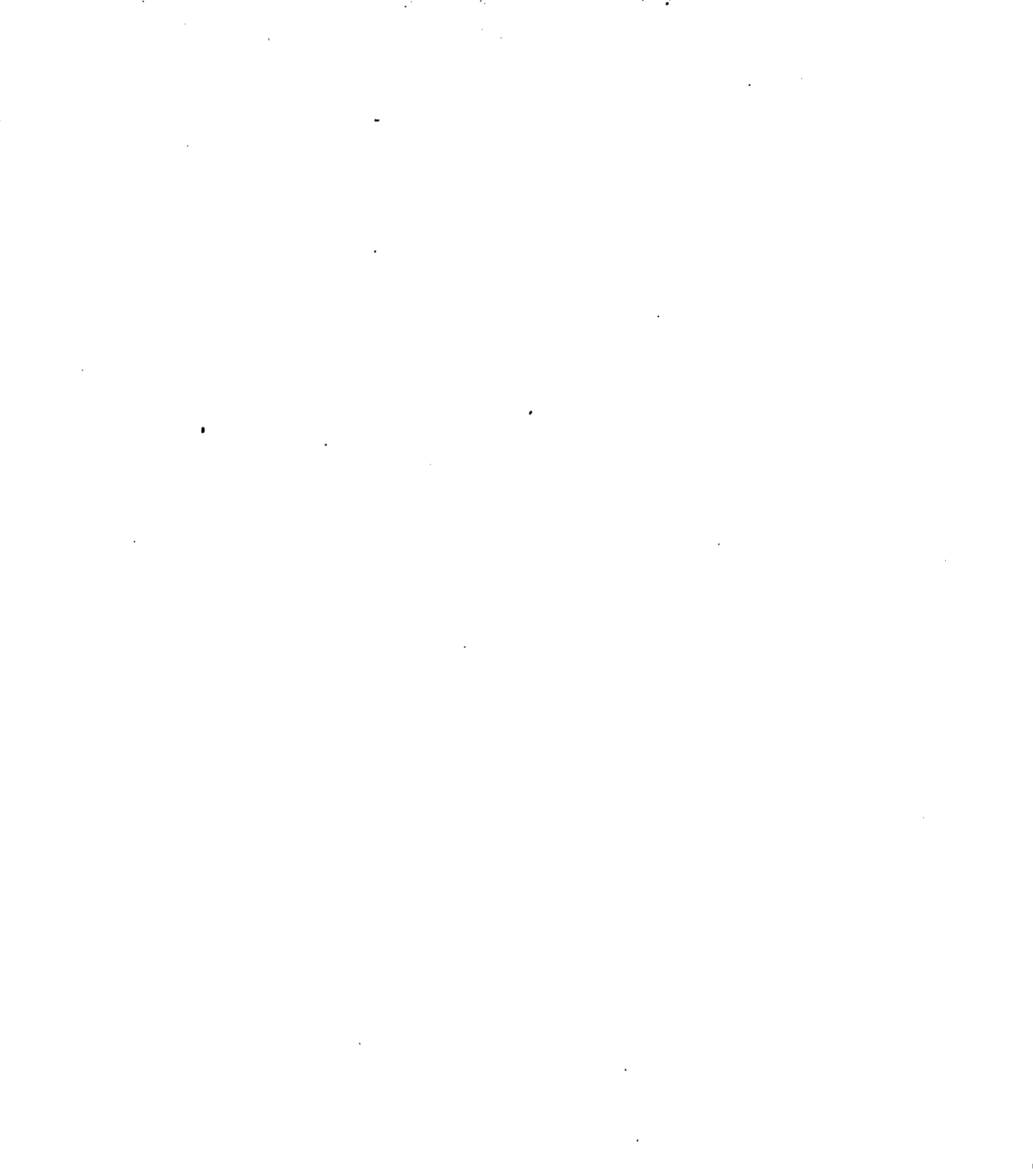
PAMELA. But I want to see you soon for I hope to have my Prodigy.

JENNINGS. I will return. *(Aside.)* I will lock her in a room, and send Lucinda back to watch her. If Serious should find her I'd be ruined. *(He takes Seraphina away.)*

PAMELA *(to Bogle.)* I wonder where Mr. Hamilton is? I wrote him to come, too.







BOGLE. He's disgusted because Clarissa's not with you,—he's bathing somewhere.

PAMELA. Clarissa went to the museum with Marie. (*Serious returns alone.*)

PAMELA. La! here's Mr. Serious, at last. Good morning!

(*There is a general exchange of curtsy and bows. Bogle gathers the children around him and sitting on the steps of one of the bathing machines, tells them stories.*)

PAMELA (*to Serious.*) This is my orphan asylum. I think there ought to be something in it, that is, if you've got any confidence in children. I haven't! not after Clarissa; since I made her practice on my piano, you can't tell the treble from the bass. I think Prodigies should all be grown up!

SERIOUS. Like yourself, ma'am! for you are a prodigy of loveliness. Mrs. Podkins, don't you find widowhood a trifle lonely after the marriage state?

PAMELA. I'll own to you I do, Mr. Serious, and I'll confide in you also, so you'll do your best to help me. I'm getting this Prodigy solely for the sake of a man who, I suspect, wishes to give me his name,—and—and—so forth—and I—am not unwilling— (*She goes to the children.*)

SERIOUS (*aside.*) Has she perceived my admiration? By the Lord Harry, she seems inclined my way!

PAMELA. Oh, dear! (*sighing.*) I hope you'll find a success among them. I've had such awful failures! Try to, won't you? Remember that it is for the man I love I want her. (*She places her hand on the head of one of the children*) What do you think of this one? (*dragging her forward.*) Good head, Heh? Looks prodigious, I'm sure! but bad in the legs! Couldn't work pedals with those!



*(She chooses another child.)* There's a figure for you! and her hair looks as if she could play—all frowsily! What do you think? Never mind, I've just noticed her feet; I thought at first they were shovels—you'd have to build a piano to fit them. *(She chooses a third child, one with large hands and big ears.)* That's the hand for music! La! she must wear an octave and a half

glove! and look at her ears! I've heard they're most important in music?

SERIOUS. I must confess, ma'am, judging from appearances, I find very little of encouragement in your asylum.

*(Miss Mitts returns.)*

PAMELA. Here's Miss Mitts—she can tell us. Lucinda, are any of the children musical?

MISS MITTS. Not vocally.

PAMELA. Instrumentally?

MISS MITTS. No, not instrumentally.

PAMELA. La! you're not very encouraging either!

*(Bogle is about to start off with the children, some on his back, others hanging on to his hands and coat-tails.)*

SERIOUS. I will go with Mr. Bogle if you will allow me, ma'am, and see if I can find any latent talent among them.

PAMELA. Do sir,—I'm sure I don't care what sort you find so long as you find some.

*(Bogle, the children, and Serious go off together.)*

PAMELA. Look here, Lucinda, I want to ask you a question. Do you believe in second marriages?

MISS MITTS. No, I do not! If each woman would be satisfied with one husband, there might be a man a-piece all around; you widows never seem to remember how lonely we must be!

PAMELA. You take my word for it, my dear, the loneliness of a maiden lady is "standing room only" compared to the awful solitude of a widow! You're prejudiced—I shall ask Mr.—Serious!

MISS MITTS. How can you be so immodest?

PAMELA. How dare you, Lucinda! I'm nothing of the sort—la! I forgot my reticule! it must be in— (*Going to the wrong bathing machine. She opens the door, screams, and backs out of the machine.*)

MISS MITTS. What's the matter?

PAMELA. Don't ask me! I got into the wrong machine! (*She goes off hurriedly.*)

MISS MITTS (*looking off in an opposite direction.*) Mercy! if here isn't Clarissa Podkins and Mr. Todd! Well! I never! (*Withdraws into Pamela's bathing machine to eavesdrop. Clarissa and Todd appear, Clarissa ahead.*)

CLARISSA (*in a disappointed voice.*) No, no, no! I want to go back! I don't like it at all! it was very different in books!

TODD. In books they elope at night, that's the reason!

CLARISSA. Well, you know *I* couldn't at night; it wouldn't be proper. What would Ma say?

TODD. I don't know. Demme! I'm not running off with her!

CLARISSA. And Margate's no sort of a place to elope to!

TODD. I think it's a very nice place, with plenty of cheery company!

CLARISSA. That's just like you, Adolphus! I'd rather mazourka all the evening with one person, but you'd prefer a Sir Roger de

Coverley where you could turn a whole row of young ladies, one after the other.

TODD. Well you know how you do mazourka,—or rather no, you do not, or you wouldn't.

CLARISSA (*tearfully.*) I didn't mean that,—you don't understand me, and you never will.

TODD. Yes, I do, my little Niobe. And you musn't give me up,—you'd ruin all my prospects—prospects of *happiness*, I mean.

CLARISSA. I don't care what I do,—take me home.

TODD. O, no, my precious chameleon, I'm not going to permit you to glide out of my heart as easily as you tripped in. I shall join hands around, with you in the centre. (*Trying to embrace her.*)

CLARISSA. No, no, *don't*, Mr. Todd.

TODD (*reproachfully.*) *Mister Todd!!?*

CLARISSA. Yes, *Mister Todd*,—take me home.

TODD. Please wait till after the ceremony, Clarissa!

CLARISSA. There won't be any such thing! I told you I would only try it to-day! and it's a failure! (*tearfully.*)

MISS MITTS (*putting her head out of the door of the wagon.*)  
The little fool—she'll lose him!

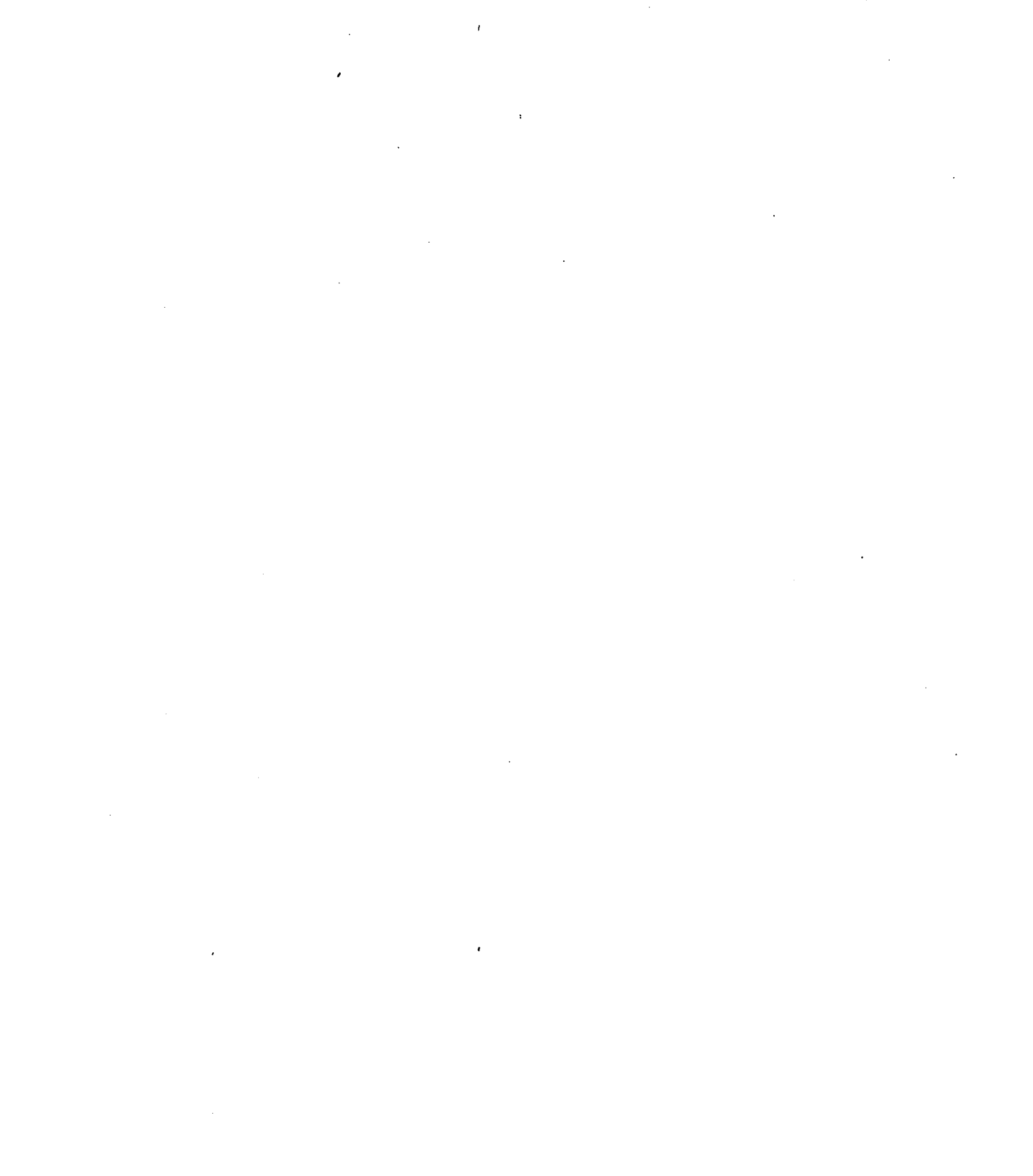
TODD (*pleadingly.*) “If at first you don't succeed, try, try, again”!

CLARISSA. I don't want to try again,—at least not with you! This is worse than being a Prodigy!

(*Todd stands in front of Clarissa with his back toward Pamela and Serious, who come on the scene together.*)

PAMELA. La! There's a couple a-flirting! Do you see, Mr. Serious? Isn't it pleasant?

SERIOUS. You're fond of the Art, ma'am?





PAMELA. Oh! I'm *all heart*, sir!

SERIOUS. You mistake me, ma'am; I said Art—with a large A.

PAMELA. I'm not particular as to the size of the A, but I thought you were dropping your H. The lack of that letter was my father's infirmity, and my mother caught it!

SERIOUS. You had a mother, then?

PAMELA. Sir!!

SERIOUS. I only thought that you, ma'am, like Venus, must have risen from the sea!

PAMELA (*blushing, and hitching her cape higher over her neck.*) Oh!—Sir!—What bare-faced flattery! Come, let us watch the love birds. (*She gives a slight scream as Clarissa at this moment boxes Todd's ear, and turns away from him toward Pamela and Serious.*)

PAMELA (*staggering back.*) Good gracious! Clarissa Podkins!

TODD (*aside.*) Oh, demme! but there! there's no need of being awkward, I'll take it gracefully! (*He poses.*)

PAMELA (*Gasping for breath.*) Clarissa! You! You! *You* child of your father!! What are you doing here? Answer me! are you struck dumb, child? I'm sure *I am*—Speak! Open your mouth, or I'll pinch you!

TODD. Ah!—how d'ye do, Mrs. Podkins? Let *me* speak!

PAMELA. I *will not!!* Hold your tongue, sir, or I'll do it for you! Merciful Providence! if it isn't that Todd! What is this? What does it mean? Why doesn't somebody speak? I shall go mad! Are you alive—*thing?* (*Poking Clarissa with her parasol.*) If you can,—speak! Expose yourself! I mean don't expose yourself! If you don't want your mother to go raving—stark—mad! you'll tell me—you'll—tell me!—what you are doing!

CLARISSA. Please, Ma, I was eloping!



PAMELA (*aghast.*) With what?

TODD (*with three steps and a bow.*) This what, ma'am.

PAMELA (*astounded.*) That what! (*Swinging her arms.*) Give me air!!

SERIOUS. Air, madam?

PAMELA. I mean something to sit on. (*Todd brings Miss Mitts' stool, which Pamela grabs from him.*) Is this true, Clarissa? You were going to marry a common dancing master?

TODD. Oh, dem it, ma'am!

PAMELA. No oaths, sir—we three, at least, are ladies! that is, one of us is a gentleman, and you are a—you are a—

SERIOUS (*interrupting.*) He, ma'am, is a master of dancing, as I am a master of music. He may be a gentleman for all that;—when you pierce *him*, you slay *me*!

PAMELA. Good gracious! I never thought of it that way! I thank you, Mr. Serious. It's all my nasty temper! I beg your pardon, Mr. Todd. Clarissa, I'm a brute! Why shouldn't you marry a master of anything?

TODD. Please, ma'am, a Professor of Terpsichore.

PAMELA. O, yes! I remember Terps—something—ore! (*aside.*) I'm sure I find a master of music most engaging. (*She takes Clarissa's hand.*) Come, Clarissa, my heart tells me to give you to him, and I will! I'd rather trust your happiness to a man who lived by his toes, than one who lived by his wits! (*She gives Clarissa to Todd.*) And with such well trained legs as yours, sir, I'm sure you'll never stray from the straight path. Take her, Mr. Todd, and my blessings on both of you. Mr. Serious, we'll leave them!

CLARISSA (*stupefied.*) But, Ma!

PAMELA. No explanation, Miss; it isn't necessary. I am—(*she*

*looks at Serious*)—I have been in love on my own account. We're in the way, Mr. Serious. *(To him.)* I'm sure I can't abide the little man myself, but that needn't interfere with my being his mother-in-law, need it? *(They go away, arm in arm. Clarissa and Todd stand looking at each other.)*

TODD. Demme! now you *have* to marry me!

CLARISSA. I *won't*, if I never marry!

MISS MITTS *(who is still in the bathing machine, appears at the door again.)* The little fool! When she's my age she'll feel differently. *(Hamilton comes out of the other bathing machine.)*

CLARISSA *(surprised and delighted.)* Oh, Mr. Hamilton!

EDWARD *(surprised and delighted.)* Clarissa!

TODD. Miss Podkins, if you please, sir!

*(Clarissa and Edward now pay no attention to Todd as they walk up and down the sands, arm in arm. Todd follows, running behind and before them, and tries in vain to get in a word edgeways.)*



EDWARD. Clarissa, Mr. Bogle said you were at home.

CLARISSA. I wish I were, but I'm not! And I'm so glad you are here, too. Please protect me,—I don't want to marry Mr. Todd—

TODD (*reproachfully.*) *Mister Todd!*

CLARISSA. But Ma's willing, now, and he says he'll make me.

EDWARD (*aside.*) So he must be one of those others her mother said she had promised her to. (*To Clarissa.*) Clarissa, will you give me the right to protect you?

TODD. She has nothing to give any one, sir! her rights and her money are mine.

EDWARD (*ignoring Todd.*) I visited your home yesterday.

CLARISSA. When, Edward? I waited and waited for you—

TODD. She waited with *me*, sir.

CLARISSA. And was perfectly miserable—

TODD. Oh, Clarissa Podkins, what a fib!

CLARISSA. You didn't come, and you didn't come.

EDWARD. I wished to see your mother.

TODD. But I've seen Mrs. Podkins first, sir!

EDWARD. Your mother refused to see me, but I told her I loved you,—(*he hesitates.*)

CLARISSA. You've never told me. (*They stop walking.*)

TODD. But *I* have, *I* have told you often.

EDWARD. Your mother made me promise I wouldn't.

CLARISSA. Promises may be broken—

EDWARD (*embracing her.*) Clarissa!

TODD. Demme! unhand my affianced bride!

CLARISSA. O, la! I forgot all about Mr. Todd.

TODD. Do you hear me, sir? Take your hands off my property, sir!

EDWARD. Listen, Clarissa,—I break my promise to your mother, —I love you. When I look into your eyes—so—I seem to see the whole world; and when I hold your hand in mine—like this—I want for nothing. Clarissa, my sweetheart, am I to take you back to your mother, or will you run off with me?

(*Adolphus Todd, unnoticed, fidgets about nervous and unhappy.*)

CLARISSA. I love Ma better than any one else in the world—with one exception, but you are that exception, Edward. Perhaps I ought to explain, however, that I *was* eloping just now with Adolphus.

EDWARD. Then continue eloping, only finish with me. In an elopement it is really the most important whom you *end* with.

CLARISSA. I will—I—I thought you didn't love me. (*She turns to Todd.*) You'll excuse me now, won't you, Mr. Todd?

TODD. Excuse you! give you up! no, demme! never!

EDWARD (*to Todd.*) Come! run away! run away!

TODD. I will not run away! I'm not afraid of you, sir! my name is Todd, sir, Adolphus Todd, and she is to be Mrs. Todd, sir!

EDWARD. Todd? Is your name Todd?

TODD. Yes, sir! Todd, sir! and what then, sir! eh sir? eh sir? eh sir? (*dancing up bravely to Hamilton.*)

EDWARD. This, *sir!* I know of you and your debts, *sir!* and your bets, *sir!* That you would wed Miss Podkins and her dowry, *sir!* That you pretended to cherish her face in your heart in order to put her purse in your pocket,—*sir!* Never cross this lady's path again, *sir!* unless it be to lie down for her to walk over you, *sir!* or I will expose you, *sir!* and in any case, take care I don't *kick* you, *sir!* at my first opportunity!

(*Todd retires precipitately.*)

(*Edward offers Clarissa his arm, she accepts it, and they disappear among the boats along the shore.*)

TODD (*watching them off ruefully.*) Coquette! (*he sniffles.*) Fickle minx! False jade! Deceiver!

MISS MITTS (*her head appearing in the door of the bathing machine.*) She's thrown him over! (*Miss Mitts watches Todd hungrily.*)

TODD. The first girl of all I have asked who ever said "Yes," and accepted me for partner in the matrimonial quadrille; and now, just when it was about to begin, she crosses over to opposite gentleman, gives him her hand, and they balance away, leaving me to do a *pas seul*! (*He tries to take a few "steps," but breaks down.*)

MISS MITTS (*to herself.*) I wonder if I could catch his heart on the rebound? I have heard it was easier so.

TODD (*to himself.*) And I have engaged a place for her on the London coach, to go back with me. If I could only marry somebody else, the money I have paid for Clarissa wouldn't be thrown away! But it is so hard to find any one who will have you.

MISS MITTS (*to herself.*) O, isn't it! and yet I could be so easily found,—but nobody looks for me. I know what I will do,—I will pretend it is leap year. I don't believe he knows it isn't, and I will teach him to believe in love at first sight. (*She tiptoes slowly and softly out of the bathing machine and down the steps.*)

TODD. I don't aspire to a Duchess, I only want heaps of money,—I would make any wealthy girl happy, I know I would; I am not pretty, but, demme, I'm loving! (*He goes away slowly and disappointedly.*)

MISS MITTS (*following him on her tiptoes.*) I'll show Mr. Bogle he isn't the only man in the world! I'll make him sorry!

TODD. To spite Clarissa, I would marry almost anybody, here on the spot, now! (*Glancing over his shoulder he sees Miss Mitts almost at his elbow, her face wreathed in smiles, her manner showing unmistakably that she is the confidante of his troubles. He feels that his last speech was too hastily spoken, and he quickens his pace. Miss Mitts quickens hers, following him in and out among the boats, till Todd, in despair, finally makes a dive into a bathing machine, and slams the door in Miss Mitts' face as she reaches the steps. Miss Mitts, determined not to be discouraged, sits down on the top step and taking out her Byron begins to read, stopping once in a while to listen at the key-hole to assure herself that Todd has not escaped by the water way. Jennings comes on.*)



JENNINGS. Lucinda, I want you to go get the Prodigy. I've found a sailing vessel that goes out to-day to America, and I'm going on it.

MISS MITTS. Sh!—I can't, I'm busy.

JENNINGS. O, come, I am busy making my preparations; surely you will go after the child.

MISS MITTS. No, I won't. I'm after something else just at present.

JENNINGS. I have to meet Mrs. Podkins here for a few moments. I must get out of paying her any money, and get rid of her other Prodigy besides.

MISS MITTS. That needn't trouble you, she hasn't found one yet. She— (*Miss Mitts breaks off her sentence as she sees Todd, who has climbed out the back way and over the wheel, about to escape her. She runs after him and catches him and they are seen walking toward the town arm in arm. Pamela appears, coming from another direction.*)

JENNINGS. Well, ma'am! where is she? heh? *Your Prodigy?*

PAMELA. La! Mr. Jennings, I had no idea they were so scarce. I thought I could put my hands on several, but they have slipped thro' my fingers. Please give me a little more time,—you will, won't you, Mr. Jennings?

JENNINGS. I am very sorry, ma'am, but that will be impossible. I have arranged already to leave this afternoon on a sailing vessel for America.

PAMELA (*despairingly.*) O! Mr. Jennings, you don't know what that means to me!

JENNINGS. I shall, of course, take the Prodigy with me.

PAMELA. O, do please leave her with me, Mr. Jennings, and let me be a mother to her.

JENNINGS. If you would let me be the father, ma'am.

PAMELA. La, sir! my affections are already engaged.

JENNINGS. Good-bye, ma'am. (*He bows.*)

PAMELA. Good-bye, sir. (*She curtsys. Jennings leaves her alone.*)

PAMELA. I must try some other way to make Mr. Serious wealthy. And my heart aches for that child; I'm afraid the manager will half kill her. O, Sammy, Jennings is looking for the Prodigy now. (*As Bogle joins Pamela, leading Seraphina by the hand, the other children following.*)

BOGLE. A boy gave me this note from Miss Mitts. (*Giving Pamela a small note.*)

JEMIMA. We saw her go off with him, Fairy Godmother!

PAMELA (*laughing.*) Him! Who? (*She reads.*) Sammy! she says she has suddenly decided to marry. (*Laughing.*)

BOGLE. Jupiter! that decision is not *so* sudden on her part!

PAMELA (*reading.*) "I have been persuaded to elope myself with your master." My master! What does she mean by that, Sammy?

BOGLE. Perhaps Mr. Serious?

PAMELA. Oh, don't say *that*, Sammy! I wouldn't believe *that*!

BOGLE. What does your heart say?

PAMELA. I don't know, I'm afraid to ask it!

BOGLE. Mr. Todd, then, the dancing master!

PAMELA. O, I wish she did! But he's eloped with Clarissa.

BOGLE. What! Great Jupiter! Pamela!

PAMELA (*excitedly.*) O! never mind that! that's nothing! Listen to *this*, Sammy. (*She reads.*) "Agreeing with you, that a master of anything is better than"—my own words about Mr. Serious! Then she does mean him! Oh, the deceitful thing! Wait till I see her! The cuckoo! or whatever it is that ruins other birds' homes—he called me his "little birdie" once! (*Walking about in a rage.*) I don't blame him. She led him astray; she forced him to it, as she nearly did you! (*To Bogle.*) Only Mr. Serious had a sweeter and



nicer disposition than you have. He didn't love her, I know that! La! he often hinted the contrary to me! I wouldn't be surprised if she drugged him with chloroform! I'm sure she's diabolically capable of it! Sammy! what do you stand still, looking at me like that for? Can't you see I'm heart-broken? Go after them! Bring them back, dead or alive! Make haste and catch them before the coach goes! Money's what Lucinda Mitts loves most! Promise it to her! Promise her all she wants to give him up,—and give her a bonus! I'll buy him from her if it takes my last penny! Go! Run! Leave me, as they have left me,—alone!

*(Bogle, who has taken Miss Mitts' letter, and read it, sends all the children over to Pamela.)*

BOGLE. No, not alone! She says in her letter,—*(reads.)* "I Leave the orphans behind me to you!"

*(The children join hands in a ring around Pamela and begin to sing "Ring-a-Ring-a-Rosy" softly. Bogle hurries away.)*

PAMELA. Oh!—the minx!—the perfidious woman!—I know one thing! I'll get my curl back! Lucinda Mitts shan't wear it! *(She breaks through the ring of children, and crosses the stage, followed by the children, who make a new ring around her, and dance around as before, singing softly.)*

PAMELA. It only shows what a fool some women will make of themselves to get married. But this one loves money even more than matrimony! Ah! Ha! Here she comes!

*(As Miss Mitts is seen approaching, Pamela starts forward toward her but finds herself caught this time in the ring of children, who refuse to let go of hands, laboring under the impression that Mrs. Podkins is playing a new game.)*

PAMELA *(to the children.)* O, go away, please! Go away any-

where! Take off your shoes and stockings and paddle in the water! Take off everything if you wish to, and swim! only go away!

*(The children all run off helter skelter, shouting, "Hurrah, we're going to paddle, to paddle!" as Miss Mitts joins Pamela.)*

PAMELA. So you have come back, have you? Has Sammy told you? How much do you want for him? How much will you take to give him up?

MISS MITTS. Ten thousand pounds, ma'am.

PAMELA *(staggering back, and untying her bonnet strings.)* Good gracious!—you cheat!! How dare you! *(Aside.)* He comes high, but I must have him, and my heart tells me he's cheap, even at that price! *(To Miss Mitts.)* Very well, you shall have it!

MISS MITTS. You must give me your written promise on paper, ma'am.

*(Pamela taking paper from her reticule and writing)*

PAMELA *(laughing derisively.)* He'd never have married you! He'd have run away at the altar, if you got him that far! It's me he loves, and of course I'll marry him! There! *(She gives the paper to Miss Mitts.)*

MISS MITTS *(calling.)* Mr. Todd. *(Todd appears from behind a boat.)*

PAMELA. Oh!—Oh, Mr. Todd! Where's Clarissa? and what are you doing here with this person?

TODD. I was going to be married to her, ma'am!

*(Pamela stands still bewildered, and failing to grasp the situation.)*

MISS MITTS. But I have withdrawn my claims. *(Aside to Todd.)* It's all right, you've got her in writing! *(Shows him the paper.)*

PAMELA. What! I've bought *him!* You! *(To Todd.)* It's a mistake, I meant some one else quite different! *(Aside.)* O!

Algernon Serious, why is it that every effort I make to bring us closer together, only raises another huge barrier between us!

MISS MITTS. You must pay me the ten thousand pounds, ma'am, just the same,—I have your promise in writing.

PAMELA. I won't keep it, and you can't make me.

MISS MITTS. But the law can.

PAMELA. I don't believe it!

MISS MITTS. And it shall unless you pay.

PAMELA. I'll *never* pay!

MISS MITTS (*aside.*) Very well, my lady, then I won't tell you whose child the Prodigy is—come along, Mr. Todd. O! there's the Prodigy with the orphans. (*Looking off among the bathing machines and boats.*) Mr. Jennings is looking for her. Come, Toddlekins, we'll get her.

TODD (*to himself.*) I wonder if it is too late for me to withdraw? I don't think I am going to fancy the matrimonial step. (*He follows Miss Mitts along the sand.*)

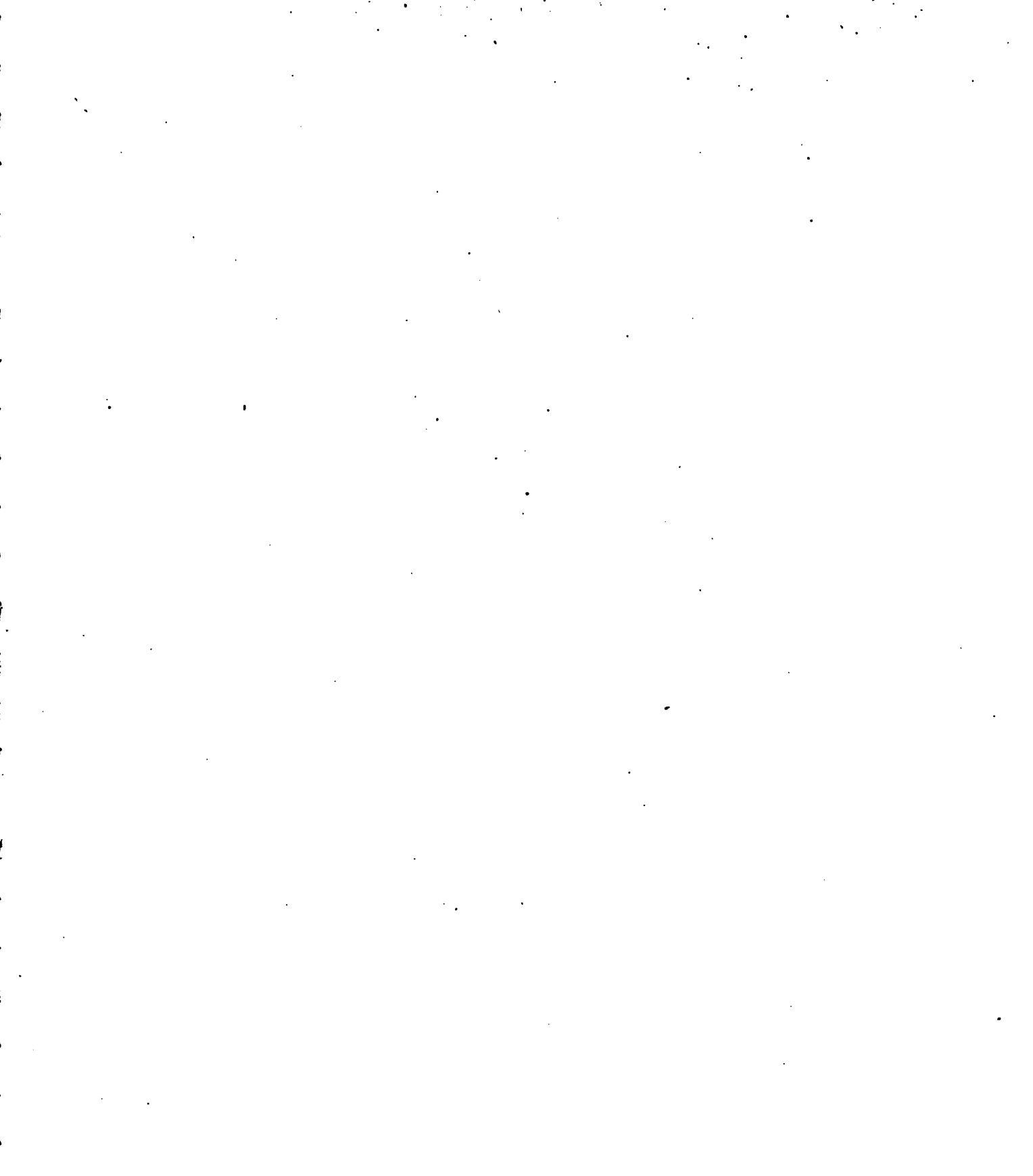
PAMELA. What a fright I had! What in the world has become of Clarissa? Where can Mr. Serious be all this time? La, I hope he hasn't lost his way. I'll go look for him. (*She meets Jennings who is hurried and nervous.*)

JENNINGS. Mrs. Podkins, your brother took the Prodigy away from the inn! Where are they now?

PAMELA. She was playing with the asylum over there.

JENNINGS. I'm afraid we will lose the boat. (*He goes quickly in the direction she points out. Miss Mitts comes from another direction walking very fast to keep up with Todd, who seems to be impelled by a spirit of "getting away." She has Seraphina by the hand.*)

PAMELA. Mr. Jennings has just gone that way after you.





MISS MITTS. Would you please take Seraphina to him. (*Aside.*)  
I don't dare to leave go of Mr. Todd. (*Todd sighs.*)

PAMELA. Ah! Mr. Todd, it's a hard world, and very few of us  
get out of it alive. Give me the child, Lucinda.

(*Todd goes toward the town, Miss Mitts on his unwilling arm,  
and running to keep up with him. Pamela starts to lead the Prodigy to  
Jennings. They come face to face with Serious.*)

SERIOUS. I lost my way, ma'am, among all these boats and  
machines.

SERAPHINA (*rushing to Serious and throwing herself upon him.*)  
Father!

SERIOUS (*seeing her for the first time.*) Seraphina! Little  
Seraphums! Found! (*He takes her up into his arms.*)

PAMELA. What!

SERIOUS (*through his tears to Pamela.*) My child! (*He repeats  
it tenderly.*) My child—

PAMELA. What!! Yours? The Pro—od—ogy. Yours!—I  
feel weak in the knees.

SERIOUS. She is mine,—my little girl, found at last, and by *you*,  
ma'am,—*you* have given her back to me!

PAMELA. And, sir, she's a—a what—do you call—'em—she's a  
Prodigy,—she'll make you rich, sir.

SERIOUS. Rich? She will! O, bless my soul, then I can—

CLARISSA (*heard calling in a merry voice.*) Ma, Ma!

PAMELA. Oh, dear, now here's an interruption.

(*Clarissa and Edward then appear coming from the town.*)

CLARISSA. I've come back, Ma! I've come back! and we're  
married.

PAMELA (*kissing Clarissa.*) Well, I forgive you both, darling,

(*kissing Edward as if she didn't know exactly what she was doing*), and I'm glad to see you—but—I wish you'd chosen another time—I'm—er—sort of—busy—just now.

(*The three talk together, Pamela keeping an eye on Serious.*)

SERIOUS (*to Seraphina.*) Would you like Mrs. Podkins for a mother, sweetheart?

SERAPHINA. O, yes, Father!

SERIOUS. Shall Father ask her?

SERAPHINA. O, *do*, Father!

SERIOUS (*nervous.*) Father will—Father will try.

(*Bogle enters.*)

PAMELA (*seeing Bogle.*) O, la! another interruption. Sammy!  
(*Bogle joins her.*) Sammy, I'm in such a hurry! I think Mr. Serious is going to propose—or else isn't going to. Shall I say yes?

BOGLE. What does your heart tell you?

PAMELA. I don't know, I've sort o' lost confidence in my heart lately.

BOGLE. Well, I will take Edward and Clarissa away for three minutes. *Three minutes*, do you understand?

PAMELA. La! Sammy, I'm so nervous I don't know if I'm standing on my head or my heels!

BOGLE. I'm happy to inform you, it's on your *heels* you're standing! (*He joins Clarissa and Edward, and the three stroll along the shore among the boats.*)

SERIOUS (*going toward Mrs. Podkins.*) You come, too, Seraphina (*taking the child's hand*), you will encourage me. (*To Pamela.*) Madam.

PAMELA (*on tiptoe with expectancy.*) Sir—

SERIOUS (*very nervous.*) Madam—I hope you remember what

I once said, because now—I wish to—to offer you—a Prodigy—and—and to ask you— (*He stops embarrassed and whispers to Seraphina.*) “You tell her, Seraphums.”

SERAPHINA (*standing on her tiptoes, whispers in her father's ear.*)  
Tell her what, Father?

(*Serious whispers in Seraphina's ear. Seraphina whispers in Pamela's ear. Pamela whispers in Seraphina's ear. Seraphina nods her head with a sly wink to her father.*)

SERIOUS (*approaching.*) Madam—

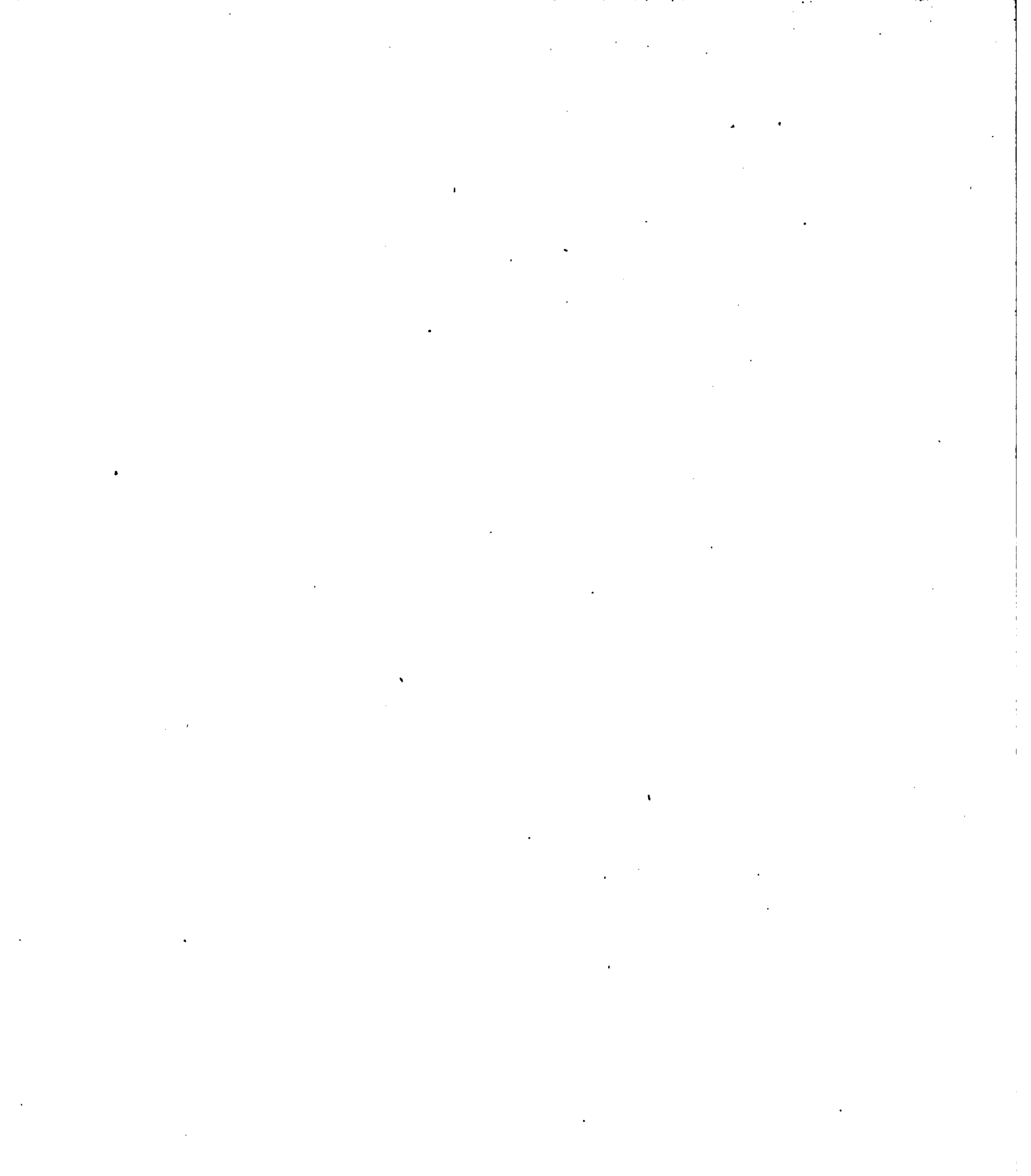
PAMELA. I am yours!—(*falling into his arms.*)

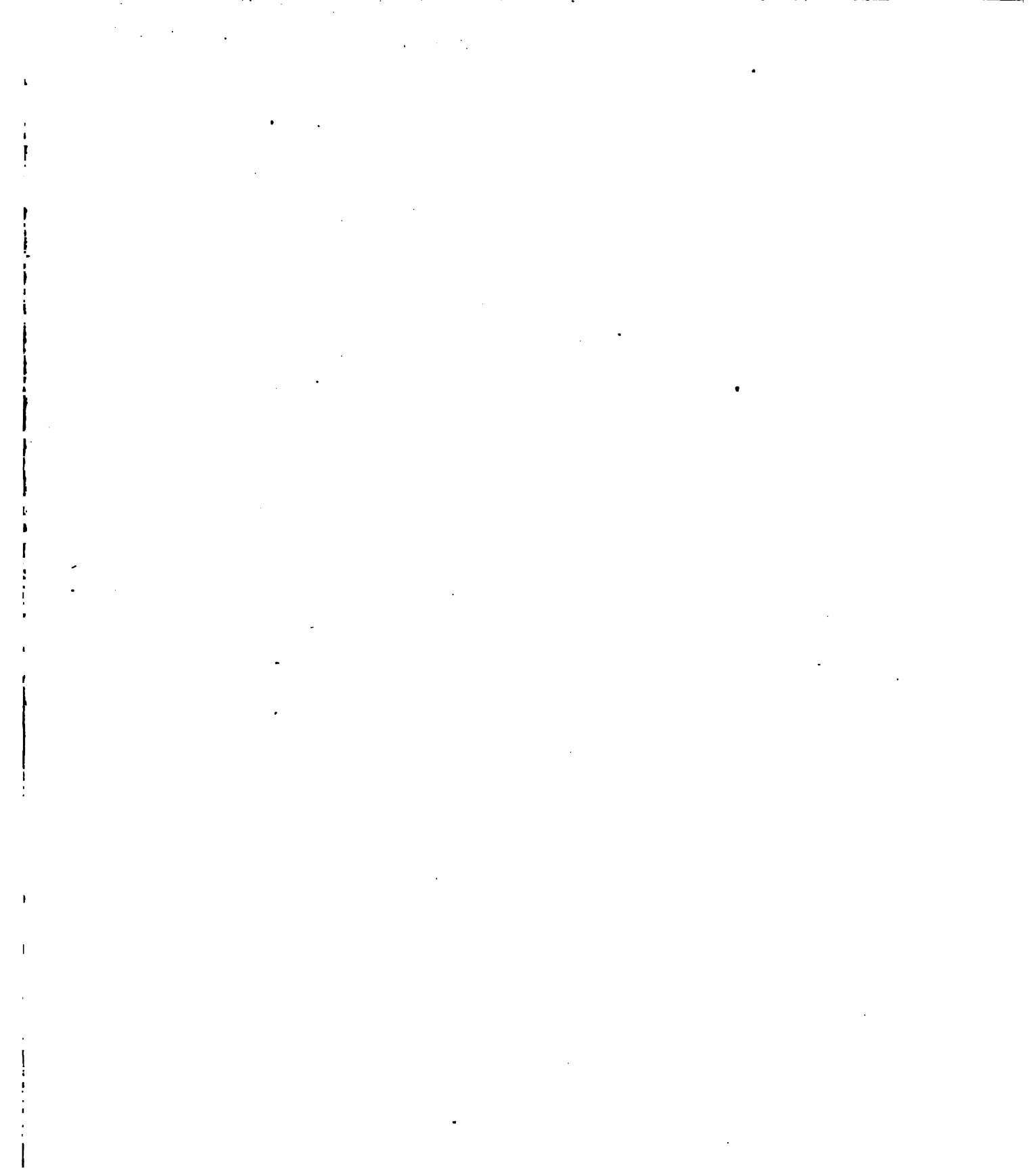
(*Seraphina stands happily beside them; Clarissa and Edward appear, and Bogle leads in all the children who dance around Pamela, Serious and the Prodigy singing, “Ring-a-Ring-a-Rosy.”*)

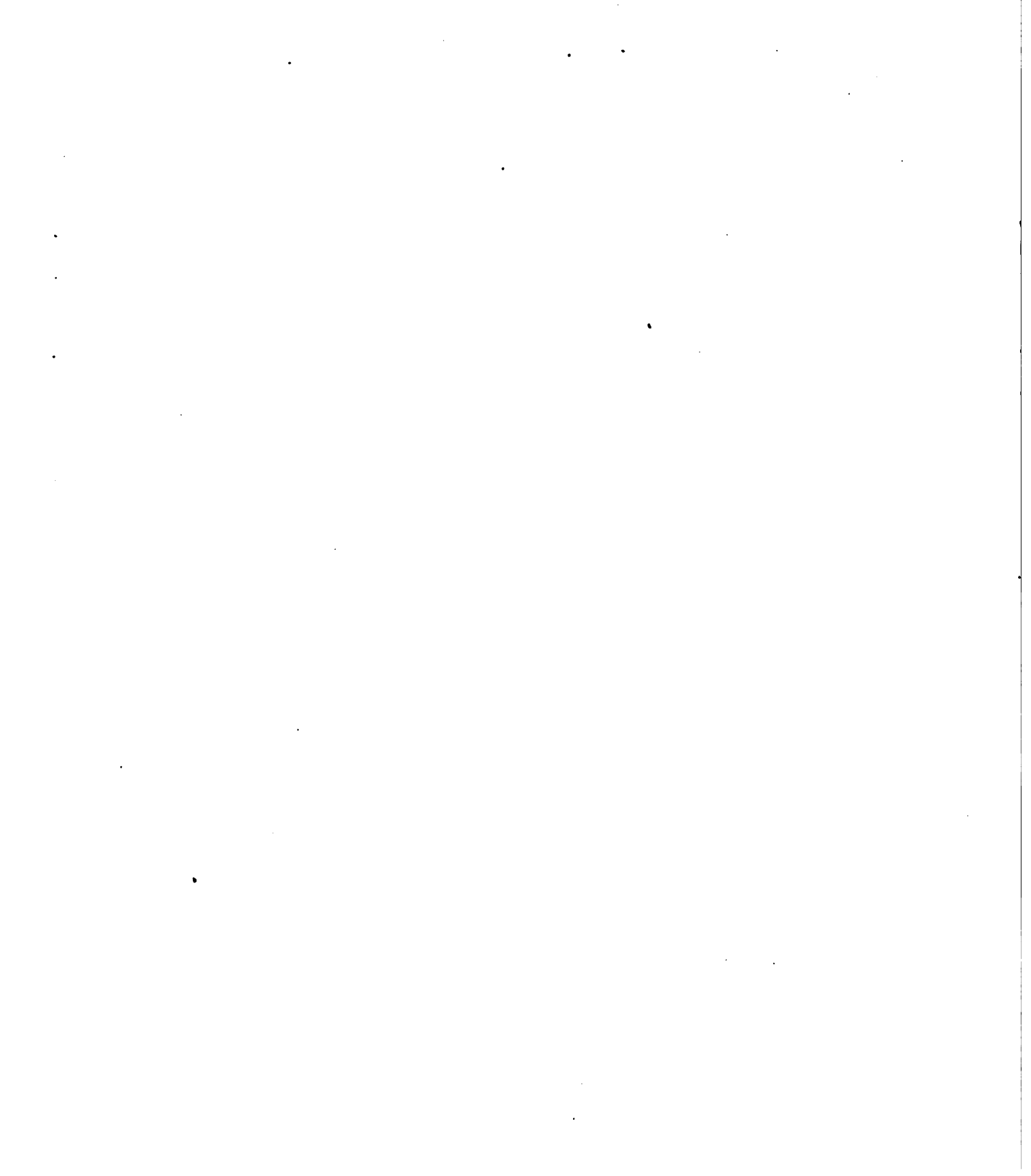
THE END.

















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